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RAW

MAY 1998

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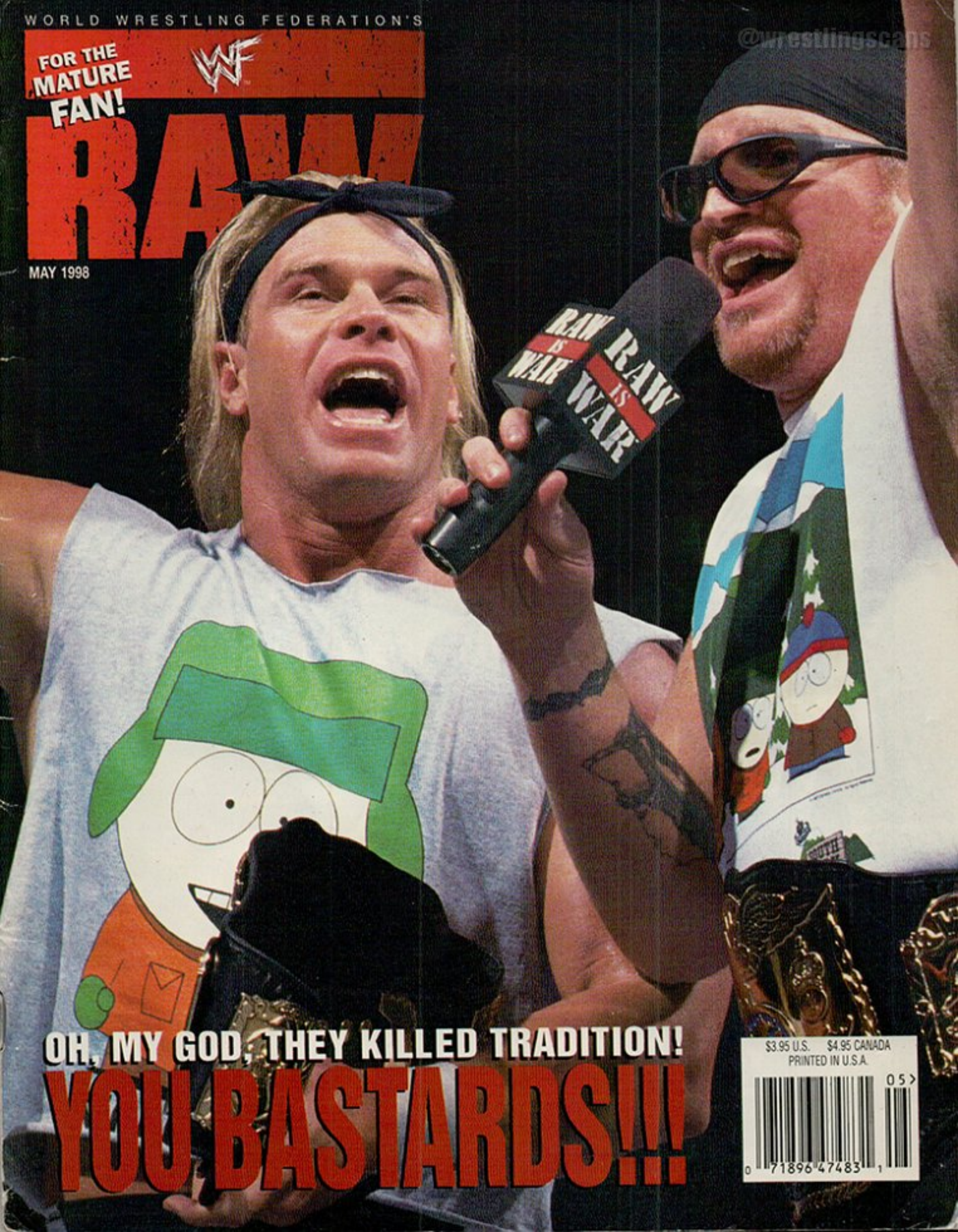

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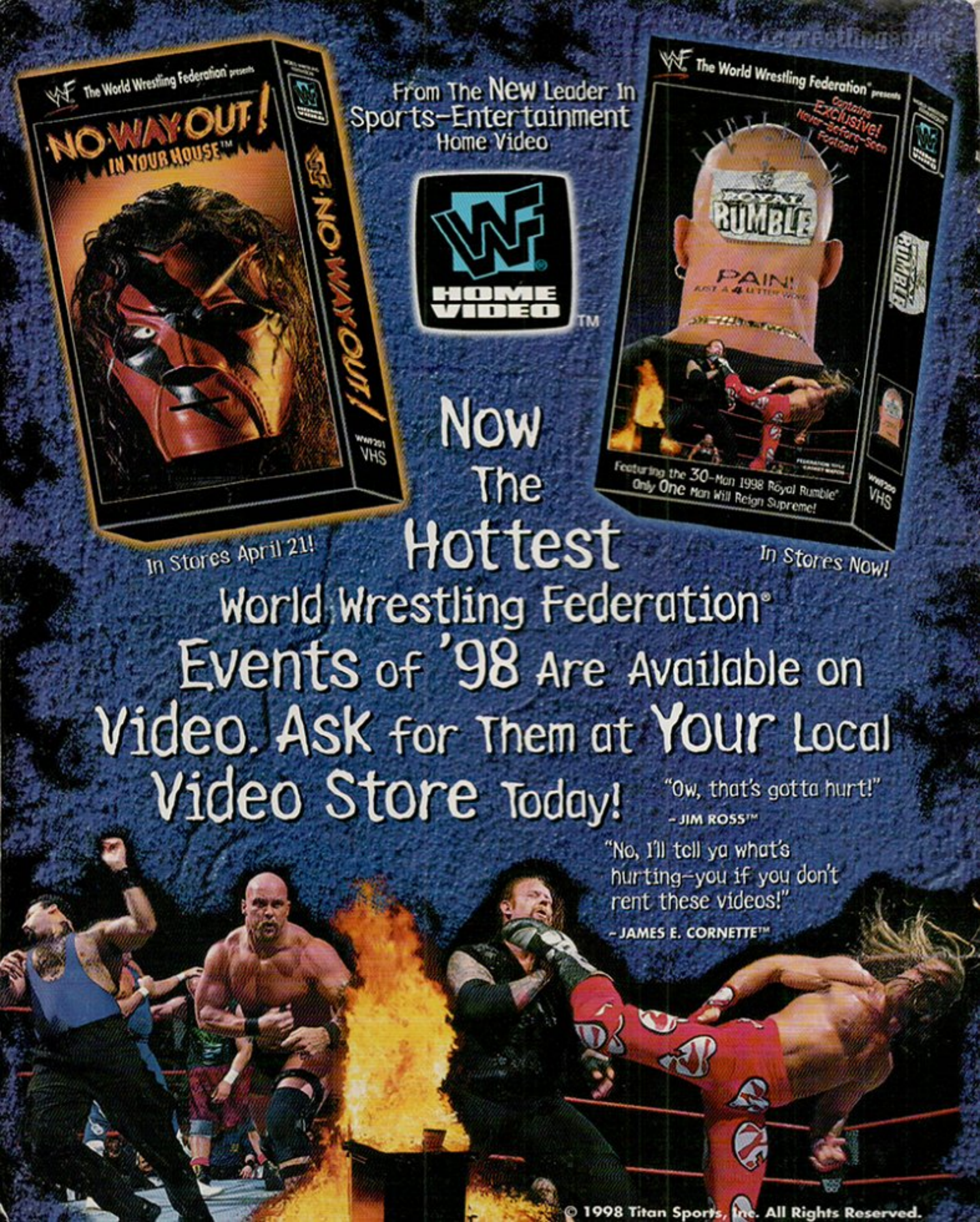
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WWF RAW™
May 1998 • Volume 3 • Number 5

CONTENTS

On The Cover
You better recognize—
The New Age Outlaws!

Features

14—Days of Apocalypse
An exclusive interview with Chainz of the D.O.A.!

20—Welcome To The World
And it's a SICK @#$% place!

26—The Ultimate?
Don't hold your breath for Shamrock-Severn 3!

30—Oh, You Didn't Know?
Your ass better check out this pictorial!

36—"EXPRESS"-ing Their History
James E. chronicles the legacy of the Midnight Express!

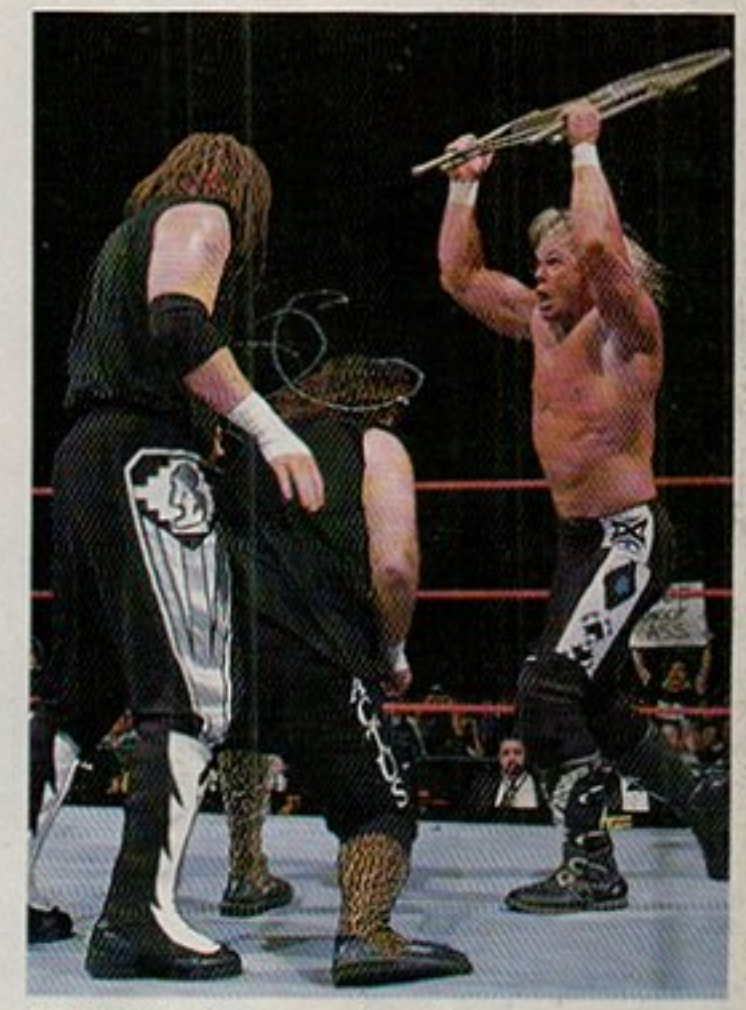
42—Bradshaw's Lookin' For A Fight!
Will he find one with Windham?

47—What's His Funkin' Story?
The life of a hardcore legend—Terry Funk!

52—Yo, Do You Remember?
The managing elite of the Grand Wizard, Skaaland, Blassie and Albano!

56—"Quebec Rules" Only!
The night Jacques and Pierre got RAW on the Steiners!

60—"The Rock" vs. "The Rock"
Rocky Maivia vs. Don Muraco in Fantasy Warfare!



Sticks and stones may break bones, but chairs do just as well! Full pictorial starts on page 30!

Departments

4 Venom Raw
Words of wisdom from the "Chief"

6 The Informer–Confidential
Could HBK call it a career?

8 Letters From the Fans
The pen is mightier than the sword!

10 Ragin' Ross
Gold Ol' JR gets RAW!

12 Shootin' From The... Mouth!
Opinions? Cornette's got 'em!

WARNING WARNING WARNING

This magazine contains nothing but high-risk, nail-biting, off-the-top-rope, uncensored MAYHEM! It is only recommended for the serious World Wrestling Federation fan! May prove to be far too much to handle for the lighter-weight fan, pregnant women and those who suffer from high blood pressure.

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Editor-in-Chief
Vince Russo

Editorial
Managing Editor: Kevin Kelly
Field Editor: Keith Elliot Greenberg
Copy Editor: Janet Simms
Staff Writer: Bill Banks
Contributing Writer: Lou Gianfriddo

Technical Advisor
Howard Finkel

Design
Art Director: Michael Woodside

Photography
Senior Photography Editor: Noah Wilker
Staff Photographer: Tom Buchanan
Contributing Photographer: Rich Freeda

Operations
VP Publications & Creative Services: Debbie Bonnanzio
Production Director: Brad Sagendorf
Production Assistant: Scott Caffrey

Advertising/Sales
Senior VP North American Sales: James A. Rothschild
Advertising Director: Craig Cassanelli
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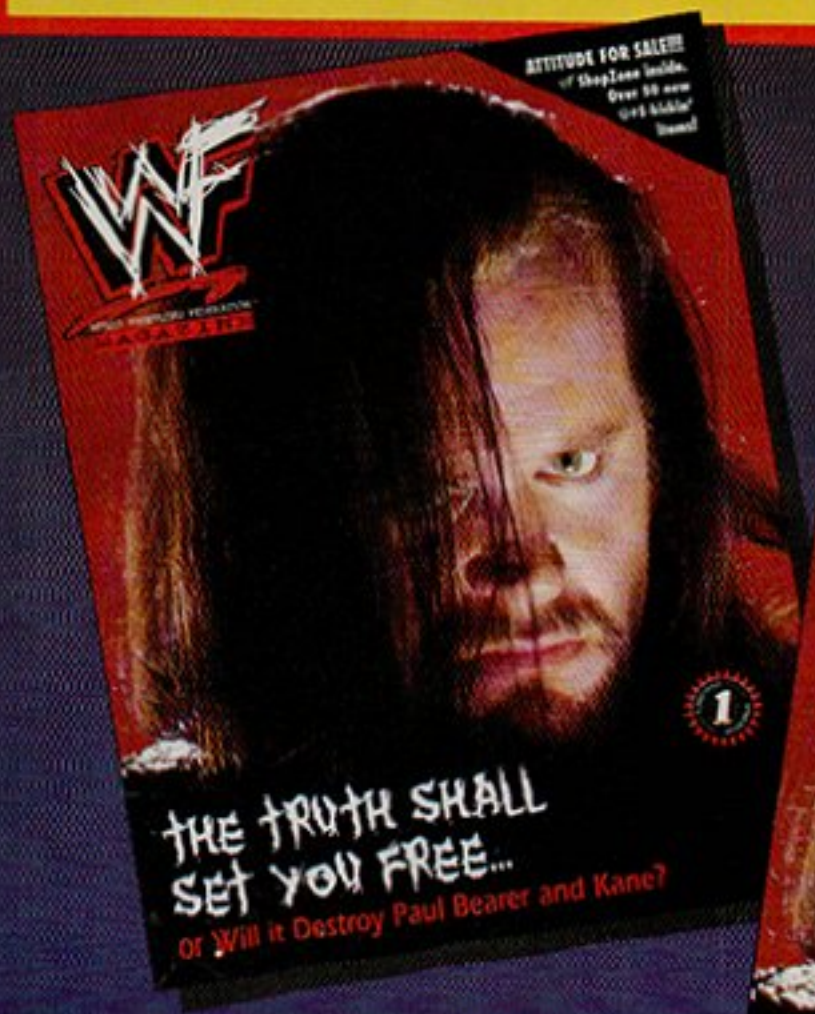

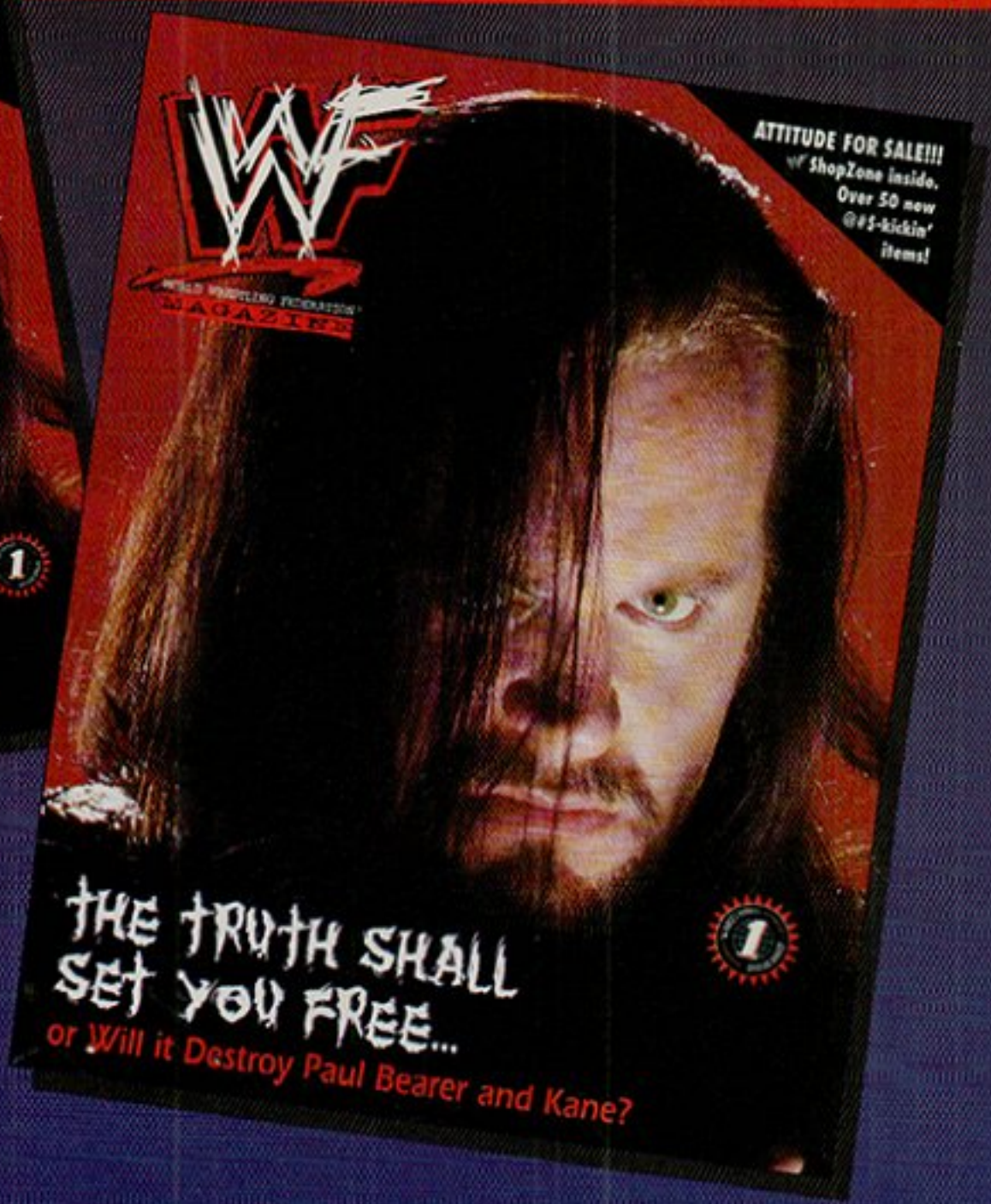

WWF ATTITUDE™

Come get some!

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By Vic Venom

Venom: Uncensored!!!

(DISCLAIMER: THE OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF TITAN SPORTS OR THE WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION.)

KATHIE LEE BEWARE!!!

I gotta be outta my mind!!!

After working my ass off this week—three days of television and three days of torture from a publications staff who puke under pressure—here I am writing this damn article at 11:00 p.m. on Saturday night. Between Howard Stern on "E" and "MAD TV", I just can't shake these "what ifs" from my fried brain. Ya know, this business is a sickness. Once you get it in your blood—it's with you 24 hours a day. You eat, sleep and drink it. You can't get away from it... nor do you want to.

What if?

What if Stone Cold Steve Austin becomes the World Wrestling Federation Champion at *WrestleMania* XIV?

Answer: Simple—houses will sell out, ratings will go up and Pay-Per-View buys will increase. Stone Cold will make money. Titan Sports will make money. And I'll be able to afford that big shot New Yawk attorney when my wife decides to file. Yep, all will be well in Stamford, Connecticut.

But...

What if Vince McMahon attempts to "change" the World Wrestling Federation Champion?

You know—smooth his edge a bit. Have him kiss a baby or two. Smile. He's done it before, you know. The infamous *World Wrestling Federation Magazine* cover with the then-new champ Big Daddy Cool grinnin' from ear to ear like the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. In my opinion, that was the beginning of the end for Kevin Nash. But being the champ, he had to display that certain image. C'mon, he had to be able to attend charity events, for cryin' out loud!!! He had to sit there and kiss Kathie Lee's ass for 10 minutes. He couldn't be that ruthless, "Don't give a @#$!" killer he was before. That just wouldn't have worked for the "Titan image."

And then there was Shawn.

Does anybody out there remember when the Heartbreak Kid was World Wrestling Federation Champion prior to DX? I believe he kissed Kathie Lee's ass for 15 minutes!!! Man, was he a completely different person. He was asked to be. How are we gonna put him on *Baywatch* if he's that arrogant, cocky @#$ we all know and love so well? No—we've gotta change him. We've gotta make him a media darling!!! We've gotta make him MARKETABLE!!!

You can't blame Nash or Michaels. When the boss says do something, you either do it—OR GO THE !@#$ HOME!!! They did it. Reluctantly—but they did it!!!

Stone Cold Steve Austin.

If he becomes World Wrestling Federation Champion—he just may GO THE !@#$% HOME!!!

Man, is Vince in a unique position—OR WHAT?! On the one hand, he makes a !@#$-load of money with Austin as his champion. On the other—he has no control over the crazy S.O.B.!!! Let's face it—this guy ain't kissin' Kathie Lee's ass for ANY minutes!!! As a matter of fact—I say he gives the !@#$% the Stunner!!!

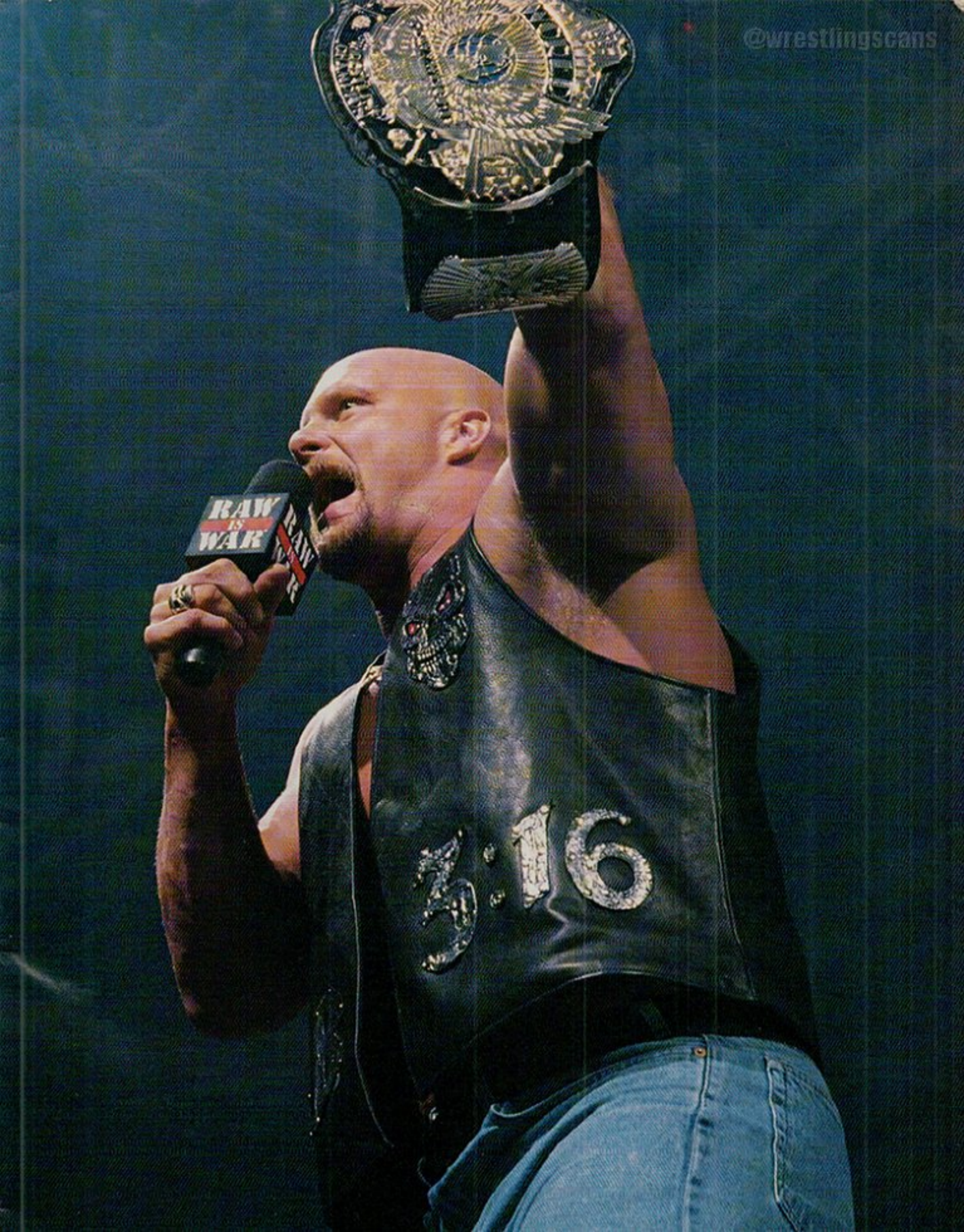
What's the boss to do? What will the boss do?

It's 11:40. That Mary Katherine Gallagher KILLS ME!

Anyway—it's a real interesting situation that we may soon have on our hands. Vince McMahon and his Titan Sports being represented by a World Wrestling Federation Champion who is simply out to make his life !@#$% miserable. I'll tell you right now—he ain't smilin' for the cover of this magazine.

AND—if you want him to, Vince—THEN ASK THE CRAZY BASTARD YOURSELF!!!

Later. ■



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Is It Heartbreak For The Kid?

Having covered the World Wrestling Federation beat for some four years now, I have been privy to mountains of information before it reaches you, the fans. Whereas having the inside track on just what might happen next is a special privilege, there are certain occasions when I wish I just didn't know.

This may be one of them.

According to my sources, the future of the Heartbreak Kid Shawn Michaels... may be hanging in the balance. After nearly a decade and a half of physically punishing his body night in and night out via the squared circle—the damaging impact may have finally caught up with him. With nagging injuries to both knees and two herniated discs in his back, Shawn Michaels may be seriously contemplating his future.

"Let's face it, there is nobody in this business capable of doing what Shawn Michaels does," quoted one source who asked not to be identified. "When he steps into that ring—regardless of any physical ailments he might have at the time—he gives you 150 percent. Nobody alive—that I know of—is capable of putting on the show he does. Unfortunately, it may have taken its toll on him. I mean, it's real simple—when it comes down to it the guy is flesh, blood and bones just like everybody else!"

Throughout his entire career, Shawn Michaels has worked through injuries. His knees were always his Achilles heel, but never were the injuries career-threatening. With the proper rest and rehab Shawn was always able to return to active duty—never letting up or favoring his knees at all. In January 1998, however, at the *Royal Rumble*, Shawn suffered a back injury when the Undertaker dropped him—back-first—on one of the corners of the hardwood casket. Days later the injury nagged Shawn, but it didn't really kick in until he attempted to rehab it. According to the three-time World Wrestling Federation Champion, while weight-training to strengthen his back he felt a numbness in his left leg that left him momentarily motionless. He was then taken to a nearby hospital where doctors diagnosed him with two herniated discs in his back. At the time, it was not known whether, or not, Shawn would need surgery—it was basically a wait-and-see situation.

Taking nothing away from Stone Cold Steve Austin, many speculate about whether Shawn is 100 percent going into perhaps the biggest match of his career at *WrestleMania* XIV. In the weeks leading up to it his back is still stiff, which caused him to miss a few scheduled appearances on *Raw*. But Shawn doesn't want to let anybody down. He has a date with Steve Austin, and he wants to be there regardless.

"With Shawn Michaels... it's all about pride," said *RAW Magazine* editor-in-chief Vic Venom. "He wants to go out there and perform to the max regardless of what his body is telling him. That's the kind of competitor he is. If you tell him he CAN'T... he DOES! That's the great thing about him. Unfortunately... he may have defied the odds one too many times. Can he come back and compete in the World Wrestling Federation at the level

According to the Informer, the Heartbreak Kid could be facing the decision of his wrestling career—give his body time to rest or consider early retirement.

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that he wants to? Well, we'll all just have to wait and see."

That brings us to a rather interesting point. If Shawn Michaels comes to the realization that he can no longer give 100 percent to the fans, will he walk away—or will he continue to compete? Hopefully—given the time to properly heal his body—he won't be faced with such a decision.

"Like they say—'Time heels all wounds,'" cited Venom. "And if Shawn gives his body the time it needs, then perhaps the notion of an early retirement will be elimination. From one sports-entertainment fan to another—that's what I'm prayin' for!!!"

And from one journalist to the fans—I'm wishing the same. The truth is... it just wouldn't be the same without Shawn Michaels. You can love him, you can hate him, but you can't live without him. He has entertained us like no one else for almost a decade and a half. In fact, sadly, I believe that many, myself included, may have taken the Heartbreak Kid for granted. If we did, it was simply because he's so good at what he does. He makes it look painless. Whenever he steps between those ropes—he becomes impeccable. An injury might hurt... but it would never stop him.

The truth—he is human and none of us can ever forget that. He bleeds... he breaks... he cries.

He is not a machine, but simply—a man. A man we would all greatly miss, whether he realizes it... or not. ■

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Letters To The Editor:

Attitude—Come Get Some!

E-mail

Dear Editor,

First, I have a comment about some articles in recent issues of the *RAW Magazine*. Great job on the Los Boricuas and Charles Wright pieces! But I, along with most other fans, would love to see Wright back as Papa Shango and Savio as TNT! Second, I think you're all doing a great job every Monday night on *RAW IS WAR*. Don't let up on the aggression, no matter what some of the media say. If some people can't take the "World Wrestling Federation Attitude", then let them watch some "family-oriented wrestling" instead.

Lodi

DXLodi@aol.com

Triple Thanks

Letter

Dear Editor,

I would just like to comment on the great interview Vic Venom did with Paul Levesque (or as others know him, Triple H) in the March issue of the *RAW Magazine*. I've always felt Hunter is an incredible athlete, ever since his days in WCW. And no matter how crazy he, Shawn and Chyna get with their antics, I'll never lose respect for his ability. It's nice to actually read about a guy who dedicates his life to the sport of wrestling, unlike some wrestlers who just go to collect a paycheck.

Shelly Neelon

Lake Stevens, Washington

The Ultimate Prospects!

E-mail

Dear Editor,

With the success of Ken Shamrock's transition from the Ultimate Fighting Championship competition to the World Wrestling Federation, my friends and I want to see more Octagon athletes brought into the Federation! If you did, you could even start your own toughman division! We definitely think Vince McMahon needs to get his hands on some more hard-hitting superstars. I recommend fighters like Royce Gracie, Don "The Predator"

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Frye or "Fierce" Kimo Leopoldo! As a matter of fact, Kimo fought Shamrock once, and it was one hell of a match!

Rigor Maglaya
rolexis@yahoo.com

Don't Be A Cause!

Letter

Dear Editor,

I've got something to say about the "Road Less Traveled" article in the March issue of the *RAW Magazine*! You guys have to stop spreading so many rumors about the superstars because it's starting to affect them. What do I mean? Ever since the *RAW Magazine* came out with the rumors about Animal and Hawk, they've started losing matches. Do you think you can just go and write about anyone's troubles and create a stir? I'll be very upset if the Legion of Doom end up breaking up just because of something you guys cooked up!

Douglas Evans
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Legends Are Off Limits!

Fax

Dear Editor,

When Kane first entered the World Wrestling Federation, I was actually happy that a big man with a bright future was competing in the ranks. Sure, the Undertaker's little brother beat up some superstars, but that's the name of the game. But my attitude completely changed once I saw Kane attack Michael "PS" Hayes (otherwise known as Dok Hendrix) on a recent *RAW IS*

WAR. This is where Federation officials have to draw the line. What's next? Kane going after Hall of Famers? I for one find it disgusting that Commissioner Slaughter did nothing about the attack on the former Freebird. For all we know, Kane could have cost us a comeback of the Freebirds!

Harry Trousberg
Baltimore, Maryland

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E-MAIL us at the following internet address:
WWFEDITOR@AOL.COM

WRITE us at:
World Wrestling Federation Magazine
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P.O. Box 3859 Stamford, CT 06905

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RAGIN' ROSS!

By Jim Ross

Random thoughts from good, old JR who is still amazed at the overwhelming feeling we all left WrestleMania *with.*

FYI: *Rattlesnakes* do not make good pets. ASPCA 3:16!

DX is changing! The *HBK* situation is certainly newsworthy. Will *Triple H* become "The Man"? Or is that *Chyna*'s role?! And you can bet a river-bottom farm that the DX roster will grow significantly in 1998 as well.

Over the long haul, do you honestly think the awesome *Undertaker* will be able to eliminate his younger brother *Kane*? Over *Paul Bearer*'s prone, rotund body only!

Could *Ken Shamrock* use an anger management course? Until Shamrock learns to control his temper, he, not "The Rock", may be his own worst enemy. Knuckle up with a cup of Sanka!

Why won't *"The King"* admit that *Brian Christopher* is really his 20-something son? Probably made for some interesting PTA meetings in Memphis a few years ago.

Do you think any of *Jim Cornette's* wrestlers have ever heard the term audit?

Let me assure you of one thing—the *New Age Outlaws* are genuine pains in the behind to deal with. Superstardom has gone straight to their empty heads!

You have to be impressed with *Faarooq*, accepting so much of the blame for the Nation's recent blowup! That's the standup thing to do. By the way, *"The Rock"* is still seated.

Every day, *Bradshaw* takes another step toward superstardom. Stay tuned.

Tennessee Lee would be a great answer on *Wheel of Fortune*. Maybe too many vowels?! The bottom line is: the world's greatest promoter is certainly going to make a positive difference in *Double J's* career.

How did *Sunny* solve the *LOD*'s problems? Might make an interesting topic for Jerry Springer. Something is not quite right here. Stay tuned for this one.

What must *Marlena* be thinking? And trust me, she *is* thinking.

Expect the *Jackyl* to become more influencial as this year progresses. This young Canadian is certainly an evil genius.

The World Wrestling Federation's recent recruiting efforts will soon begin paying dividends. Without question, unlike other promotions, the Federation is attempting to install significant youth on the roster.

Chainsaw Charlie, a/k/a *Terry Funk*, is one of the most interesting people I have ever known. Quite frankly, he's an amazing athlete, but all this "hardcore" stuff has me a little confused. Is "hardcore" really that important? Maybe in bingo halls?!

Will this be *Vader*'s year? His physical conditioning is the key. World Wrestling Federation fans have only had a glimpse of what the Mastodon can really do!

As annoying as Jim Cornette can be, he's still one of the best broadcasters I've ever worked with. Knowledgeable, outspoken and passionate. Much different from some of the people I worked with during the late 80s and early 90s.

Do you get annoyed at announcers when we completely ignore the match in the ring to "shill" about television ratings and how great everyone is?! Me, too. And JR is guilty of this at times, too. I'm going to work on that! Hopefully, others in the business will as well.

I want to thank all you fans for making the "Ross Report" the top option on the World Wrestling Federation Superstar Line, according to Titan Sports, Inc. I would brag some more because I can't talk about it on TV... wait a minute, that's somebody else's B.S.

See you next month!
JR

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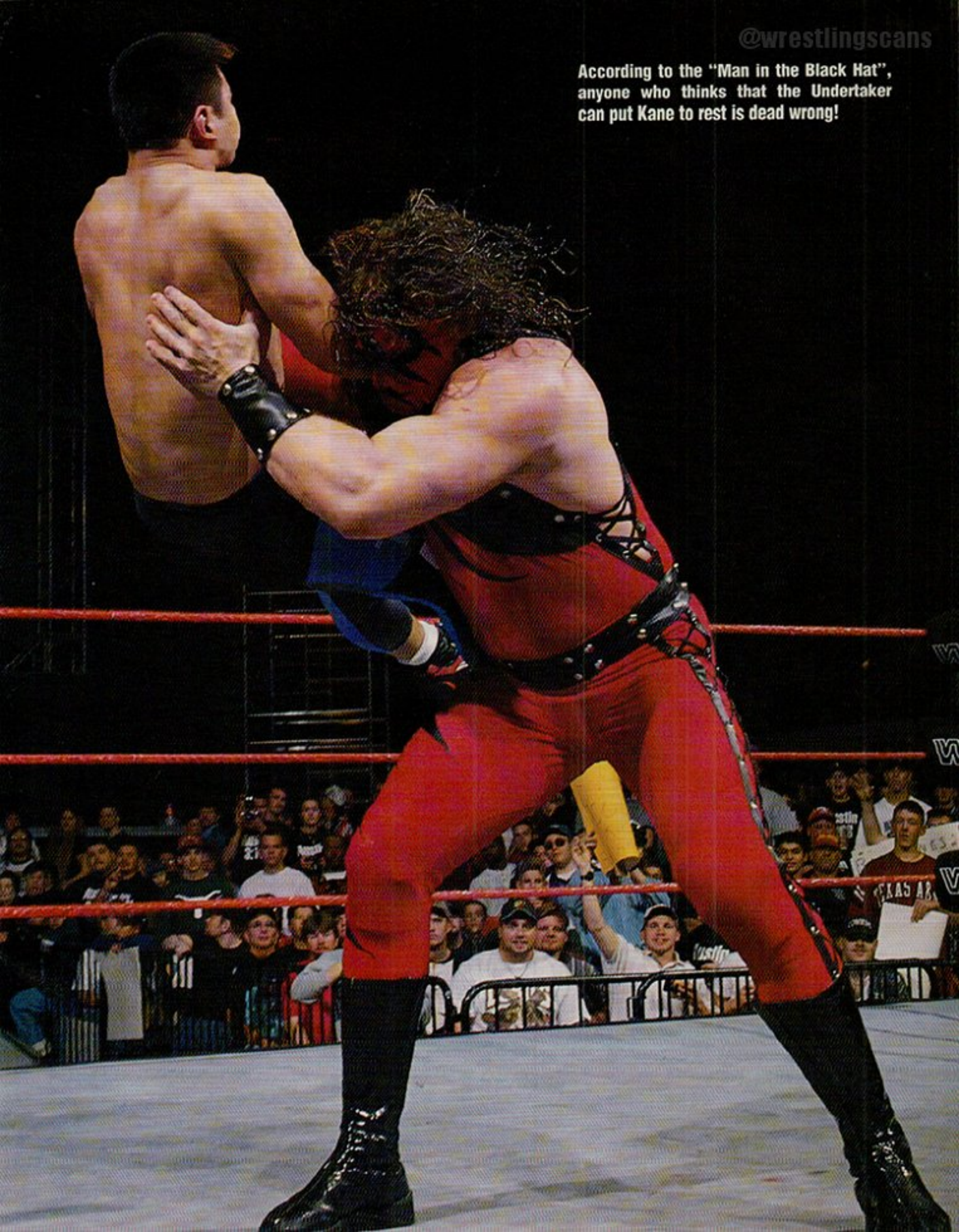

According to the "Man in the Black Hat", anyone who thinks that the Undertaker can put Kane to rest is dead wrong!

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By James E. Cornette

"So you wanna be a wrestler?"

TWENTY YEARS AGO, that was the phrase uttered by veteran wrestlers in the locker room whenever the rookie on the card returned from jerking the curtain, with his head busted open, or his knee dislocated or his ribs cracked. The old-timers knew that becoming a professional wrestler was no easy task. It still isn't, but the manner in which one enters the professional ranks is very different in 1998 than in 1978. Every day young men all over the country ask me how to get started. This article examines how it was done then... and how it's done now.

So you wanna be a wrestler? Read on—you may change your mind.

Years ago "wrestling schools" were nonexistent, but there were 25 to 30 regional wrestling promotions in the United States and Canada, doing anywhere from fair to sell-out business. Every city of any size in the country had live wrestling events on a monthly or even a weekly basis. If you wanted to be a wrestler, your first task was to go to the matches and hang around the locker room entrance. Carry the wrestlers' bags, run errands, be a gopher, offer to help set up the ring for free or sell programs.

Sooner or later, one of the wrestlers might take a liking to you, or the promoter might start letting you in free of charge. Then you let it be known politely that you'd love to wrestle someday. If you looked like you stood a chance, one of the wrestlers might teach you a few things. You would pray for one of the wrestlers' cars to break down so that the promoter would need a breathing human as a replacement on 10 minutes' notice. Or perhaps at a television taping they needed a warm body to face one of the stars. Either way, you'd be beaten, pummeled and stretched to within an inch of your life.

If you came back the following week after taking a beating like that, they had a little more respect for you. Someone might actually teach you a few moves before they threw you in the ring to get your brains beaten in again... and again... and again. By now you might even start getting PAID to wrestle. At this point, the promoter you had been working for in Nashville, Tennessee, might be on the phone with the promoter in Amarillo, Texas.

Mr. Amarillo might mention that he'd like to find a new face to "jerk the curtain" in his area. If you're any good, Mr. Nashville would recommend you, and shortly thereafter you'd be packing everything you own into your car, driving to Amarillo and meeting your new boss in person when you show up for your first match. If you're good, you'll be wrestling six or seven nights a week and you're on your way. If they don't like you, you get two weeks' notice and go back home to start all over again. As a rookie in the opening match position, you'd make between $40 and $150 per match, depending on how business is in the particular area. Don't even imagine that you would be allowed on the card in one of the showplaces of the sport—the Omni in Atlanta, Madison Square Garden in New York City, the Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis or the Superdome in New Orleans. You aren't ready for that—not at this stage of the game.

Sound appetizing? Folks, just about every big star in this sport in this century started that way. Cactus Jack drove eight hours each way on weekends to train with veteran Domenic DeNucci and sleeping in his car. Beautiful Bobby Eaton started setting up rings his freshman year in high school and was a pro by the age of 16. Freebird Terry Gordy had his first professional match as a six-foot three-inch, 250-pound 14-year-old by lying about his age.

There were almost no organized training programs—although one notable exception was the program run by Verne Gagne and the old American Wrestling Association, where one class produced former Olympians Ken Patera and Chris Taylor and a fellow named Ric Flair. Flair later took pity on a young lifeguard in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, named Stan Lane and trained the young man in his back yard.

Well, things have changed. Today, it's easier than ever before to become a professional wrestler, and harder than ever to make a living at it. Instead of 30 territories, there are now two national promotions and literally a hundred or more part-time promoters all over the United States who present matches anywhere from once a year to twice a week in front of anywhere from 15 to 1500 paying fans. Some local promoters run well-organized events with veteran stars and a regular

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clientele, and others are little more than "Hey, kids, let's put on a show" productions where all the promoter's friends can call themselves pro wrestlers. If you try, you can probably find one of these events, and if you have a pair of tights you can probably wrestle—for free, that is.

You say you need to learn how to wrestle? There are now a plethora of schools and training centers. When the territories went away, some returning wrestlers began opening schools to meet the demand. Some are great, some are good, some are a joke. Proceed at your own risk, but if the best credential the wrestler running the school can offer is that he was once Montana State Champion, you can imagine what you will learn.

After graduating from a wrestling school, plan to spend a lot of time booking yourself on cards all over the country and run by dozens of different promoters. Prepare to drive 500 miles one way to a match to wrestle in a dilapidated ring with no shower facilities in a high school gymnasium or National Guard armory with no security to contain rowdy fans. And be prepared to STILL make between $40 and $150 to wrestle.

You just don't fall off a turnip truck and get a contract with the World Wrestling Federation or World Championship Wrestling. Even though that turnip truck HAS hit a bump in front of the offices in Atlanta or Stamford on a few infamous occasions, it's not often. If you're a bodybuilder or a football player who's never seen a wrestling match in your life and somebody told you that you could make a million dollars doing this, find another line of work. If you *can* learn to wrestle, by the time you do you'll be old enough for social security.

You have to be a FAN first. You become a wrestler because you enjoy it, and you'd do it for free if you had to. Make it a weekend hobby and if you make money at it, it's a bonus. Because you probably won't... but you might.

On the current Federation roster, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Shawn Michaels, the Undertaker, Owen Hart, Terry Funk, Faarooq, Goldust, the Legion of Doom and others came up through the territory system. The Headbangers, Triple H, D-Lo Brown, Billy Gunn, Kurrgan, Tom Brandi and others came up through the independents. Success comes to those who have the talent AND the opportunity, but it's not as easy as some think.

So you wanna be a wrestler? Now you know what you're in for. ■

An exclusive interview with Chainz—the disciple turned leader

THE ART OF THE GAME.

It's the way of this business, and Chainz knows how to play the game well. In professional wrestling, there are always fellow superstars who will step on you to get to the top. One minute they shake your hand, and with the free hand reach behind to stab you in the back. Chainz doesn't play that way. This superstar is one of the most respected competitors in the locker room for the simple fact that he tells it like it is—a straightshooter. Amidst the grueling road schedules and chaos at the front office, he's also appreciated for his sense of humor. He plays the game his way, the way it should be.

"I'm Not A Fol

BY KEVIN KELLY

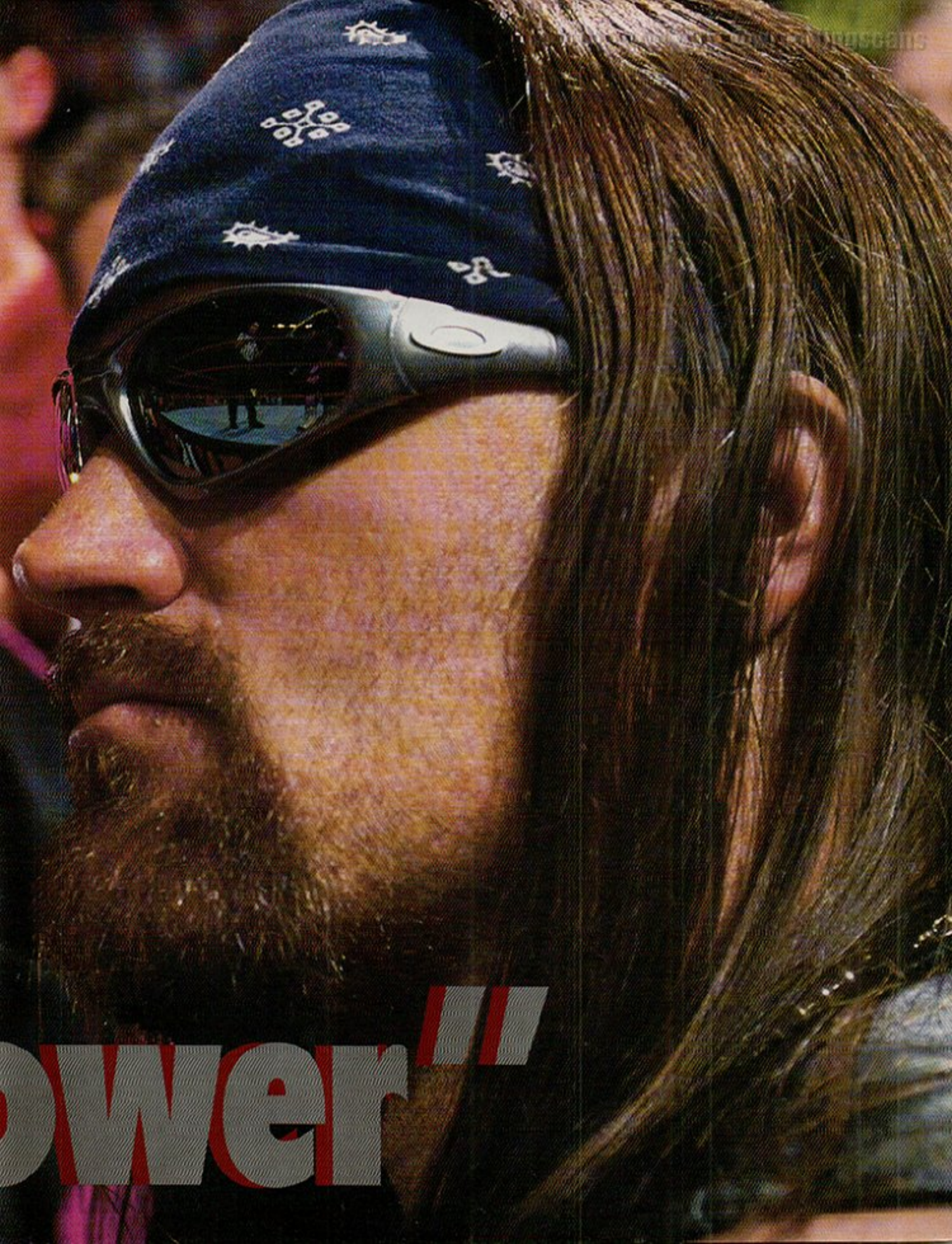
KK: Where were you born?

CHAINZ: I was born in Jacksonville, Florida.

KK: When you were growing up, I assume you were watching Championship Wrestling from Florida?

CHAINZ: Sure did, with Gordon Solie.

KK: And who were some of your influences?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CHAINZ: Actually, when I started going to wrestling with my grandfather, guys like Dusty Rhodes, Jerry and Jack Brisco, Don Muraco and all those guys. But the one guy I've tried to pattern myself after—because when I broke into the business I was like him—is Barry Windham. He's always been one of my favorites, and I do try to pattern myself after his style.

KK: And you did most of your growing up in central Florida, correct?

CHAINZ: Orlando, yeah. I moved there when I was about 13 years old.

KK: What type of kid were you growing up?

CHAINZ: A jock. I played baseball and a lot of other sports.

KK: Did you ever get into trouble or anything like that?

CHAINZ: Not at all. I was into racing a lot. I had my own car. I built my own race car... like a drag car.

KK: Besides athletics and racing, what type of student were you in school?

CHAINZ: I was a pretty good student. I made Bs and Cs. I kind of stayed to myself a lot except when I played sports. I was a standoff-ish type of guy. I wasn't into cliques too much, you know, until I got older.

KK: What were your parents like? What type of work did they do?

CHAINZ: Dad is a branch manager for Anheiser-Busch, and my mom's a housewife. She had work just raising us.

KK: How many children were there in the family?

CHAINZ: I have a younger brother.

KK: You mean to tell me you guys weren't a pair of hell raisers?

CHAINZ: Yeah, we raised a little hell, but, I mean, nothing compared to today. Hell in the 70s compared to hell in the 90s are two different things.

KK: Was sports an outlet for you? You said you kind of kept to yourself, and on the field you let things loose?

CHAINZ: Yeah. On the field I was loose and around other people I was kind of standoff-ish. As a matter of fact, when I was probably 13 to 16 years old, I couldn't even get up to do an oral book report. I was shy in front of people, but you know me now.

KK: Yeah, you're so outgoing that it's hard to imagine you were so introverted back then.

CHAINZ: Right.

KK: When did that change? Did sports change that for you?

CHAINZ: I think it changed with maturity and manhood. You get out of life what you put into it, so I started putting more into it. Then I started receiving more out of it. Rewards are a lot better than standing off.

KK: Now, you played a lot of sports in high school and you played a lot of baseball. Was there a decision about college?

CHAINZ: Yeah. The decision about college was that I started a job when I was a senior in high school working for my dad making like $12 to $15 an hour in that one-year period. And I went to community college for a little bit, played a little bit of junior college ball and then I went on into wrestling. I saw an ad in a wrestling magazine. You know, I knew [country band] Sawyer Brown when I was growing up and lead singer Mark Miller helped me financially to get started. I was trained by Rocky Montana (who unfortunately passed away last year). He was referred to me by Hiro Matsuda. Then I moved up to Tennessee and the rest is history.

KK: What year was it that you started?

CHAINZ: 1987.

KK: And how old were you?

CHAINZ: I was 21.

KK: Was that the first time you were away from home?

CHAINZ: Yes. Actually I lived with my parents until I moved away to start wrestling at about 20 or 21.

KK: So, as you're living on your own and trying to make a career in professional wrestling—was there some adjustment period being away from home for the first time?

CHAINZ: Oh, yeah. I moved to a totally different state. I was up here by myself. I lived by myself—you know, in Nashville, Tennessee—unaware of anything. I would just walk right into the dressing room. I brought my pictures and my wrestling stuff with me and told them I wanted to be a professional wrestler. I waited two weeks and then got the call from Jerry Lawler.

KK: So you began working for Lawler in Memphis?

CHAINZ: USWA.

KK: What was the initial reaction? At the time, that was a big-time territory and here you are a 21-year-old kid just starting off. Was it a shock?

CHAINZ: Yeah, it was a shock. You know, you think you're mature until you get out there and you've got 10,000 people in Memphis, Tennessee, cheering you or, vice versa, booing you. You know, you really come into your own. I really didn't come into my own until the last couple years. Back then I was just green and unaware of anything.

KK: Was there ever a time when you thought about chucking it all and maybe going back home?

CHAINZ: Oh, hell, yeah... about every other day.

KK: I know life on the road is tough. Sometimes you barely have the money to get by and eat and get to the next town.

CHAINZ: I've had pork and beans, and then pushed them to the back and have steak one week and then have to eat pork and beans again. You know, I rode up and down the road with Stone Cold Steve Austin 10 years ago, and we ate baked potatoes. I mean, that's all we could afford. We'd buy a five-pound bag of potatoes and that's all we would eat for two days.

KK: Every wrestler grows and develops, learns more, hones his craft and becomes more comfortable with who he is and what he's doing. You say it's only in the last couple of years that you became comfortable with your character and what you are doing. Where were you in between, say, over that eight-year period? What were you doing, and did you ever think about where you wanted to be? Was the struggle too much for you?

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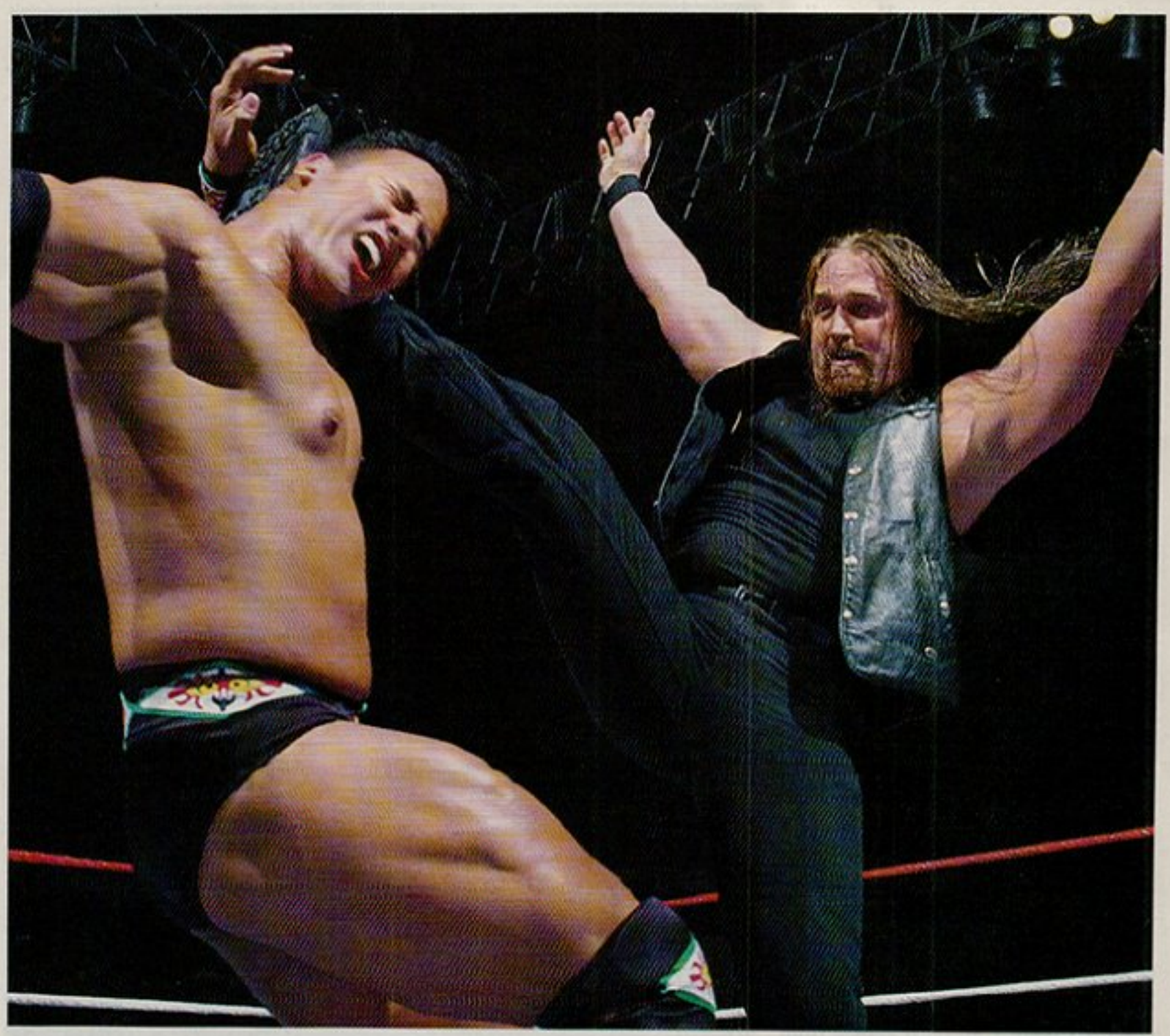

CHAINZ: Within eight years—you know, financial problems, living on your own—you gotta crawl before you can walk and then run. My initial incentive was to make it in the World Wrestling Federation. That's the pinnacle of wrestling for me. Making it in the Federation is the equivalent of the NFL or Major League Baseball. And you know, I was always striving for that, so I always had that on the horizon to look toward—I could always see the light. I would quit and go back, quit and go back, and there was one time when I did go home for a matter of two weeks. And once it's in your blood, once you taste that canvas, you just get right back at it.

KK: Now, for a time you competed in Smoky Mountain and a variety of territories throughout the South. And there was a feeling in and around the wrestling business that you were always the big fish in a little pond. Was that sort of a comfort level for you, or was that an unfair assessment of you?

CHAINZ: What happened was that I moved to Tennessee and got in there with Lawler. Once you're in a territory and you live in that area and they know that you live in that area, it's a means and that's the way you're gonna make your living. It's almost like they give you a little crumb, but they don't give you the whole loaf of bread... just a crumb at a time. Like I went from USWA to Smoky Mountain to Global back to USWA, Continental Japan and Korea. So, you know, I've had my knocks and bumps.

Agile, mobile and hostile—three words, however, cannot sum up this complex individual.

KK: As time progresses and you're almost getting to the present now and the decision to come to the World Wrestling Federation. This was your break, this was your shot, it was your time. Tell us the process. How did everything come to pass?

CHAINZ: I was in ECW, and I got called by Vince McMahon. Jim Ross actually called me, but it came from the powers-that-be. They wanted me to have a tryout. I went and tried out and within a week they called me back and like

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I said, the rest is history. I'm really coming into my own. Actually, I'm doing now what I wanted to do back then, but I was in such a structured business that, you know, you have to go through a guideline.

KK: Let's talk about being an extrovert because certainly anybody who knows you in the locker room sees you as an outgoing and personable guy. In fact, some would say you're pretty much the big comedian on the block. What's that all about, and how did you really come into that role? Is that a tough label to live up to?

CHAINZ: You can label me that. I mean, you get what you see. I don't bull@#$% around. I mean, I joke around with people in a friendly way. You know, some guys take me wrong and other guys take me like water off a duck's back. If you know me, I come across kind of harsh, but I also come across with the facts. Joking around on the job makes it easier. It's hard enough being on the road 20 days a month without getting along with everybody. So, you know, I try to feel out their personalities... get along with them so they'll get along with me.

KK: The word I get is that a lot of the things the guys say on television originates with you.

CHAINZ: Well, I mean, it comes from me, but what has anybody ever said that hasn't ever been said before? I mean, stuff's been said 50 years ago that I say today, but I do get some catchy comments, don't know how I do it. I just start saying stuff and, yeah, there are a few slides that other guys use which I started in the dressing room and I've been saying for years, but once you put it on *RAW IS WAR* or once you put it in the Federation it becomes their saying.

KK: Certainly, as a very creative guy, you have to wonder if maybe the time would come when you could have some creative input in direction. Is that something you might like to do?

CHAINZ: Oh, sure. I think the reason I joke around with the guys in the dressing room is because it's a lot easier to throw an idea at someone than to come at him and tell him what you want to do. So, if you make him think it's his idea, and you're putting your idea in his head, it's a whole lot easier to get along. As far as down the road... input? Yeah, I believe I do have a good mind for the business. I mean... eventually I do want to get behind the scenes. You know, the body won't hold up forever.

Will Chainz make this his breakout year? The Jacksonville, Florida native is certain it will be!

KK: Let's talk about the Disciples of Apocalypse—certainly one of the most eye-catching and entertaining personas in wrestling. Originally Crush was the "leader" of the D.O.A., but then he departed. What did Crush's departure mean for you? Was that a surprise? What was going on at that time?

CHAINZ: I was as surprised as anybody. I mean, Crush was the "leader" of the

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D.O.A. because he was already in the Federation. You know, as far as a leader... you can have a leader, but in your own heart you can be the leader. I'm not standing by any man anymore as far as professional wrestling. The Disciples of Apocalypse—we're all brothers, but if it comes down to it... it's dog eat dog.

KK: Do you think that within the factional system of the Federation that there's a tendency to kind of lump everybody together?

CHAINZ: What is going to happen is going to happen. I've always believed that. But you know me, and as far as the other guys go? I think I'm born to lead. I'm not a follower. I swim upstream—a dead fish can swim downstream. I've always swum against the current since I got into wrestling, so that's what I plan to keep on doing. And if it takes me straight from the Disciples of Apocalypse... let it be.

KK: Give us your thoughts on Stone Cold Steve Austin. I know you were friends with him when he was just beginning, and you guys were sharing baked potato dinners together. Did you ever think that you would see him at the level he is today?

CHAINZ: Well, no you don't, but you always strive for that level. You never thought that back when Hulk Hogan was Hulk Hogan that anybody could ever get to that level. I mean there's always gonna be a Babe Ruth, there's always gonna be a Michael Jordan to come along in years. I knew Stone Cold had great talent. I usually try to associate myself with somebody to better myself and, I mean, I've always hung around guys that have been in the business—live the business, eat and sleep the business most of the time. But Stone Cold hasn't changed a bit. If you paid him a dollar or paid him two million dollars he's the same guy. That's the type of guys that I hang out with.

KK: Now you said when you were in school that you really didn't run with the cliques or the "in" crowd. But a lot of people say that you do run with the "in" crowd now, and that's just because it's an outlet of your personality. Was that a conscious change or did that kind of happen by accident?

CHAINZ: People are people, there's all kinds of different cliques. I mean, I don't say I'm in a clique... I don't say that they're in my clique. You know, it forms, you start to hang around guys and people start to get to know you and like your personality and it just forms. Am I in an "in" crowd? Yeah, I believe because of being successful as far as my outgoing personality in the dressing room.

KK: I want to ask you about 8-Ball and Skull. They have greatly improved since their return to the Federation. Do you take any credit for that?

CHAINZ: Take credit how? I mean, you can't push a guy to a different level, and I give them credit for pushing me to a different level. I mean, you gotta do what you gotta do. There's always a quarterback, a lineman and a tight end. It's just like baseball, there's a pitcher, catcher and a home run hitter. You gotta know your role, and it's just like anything. Like a rock 'n' roll band, you know—I'm just giving you these scenarios—there's a lead singer and there's a drummer. Without them it doesn't work, but there's always gonna be somebody that stands out. I give them credit. Yeah, they've come up. Do I think that I'm a better athlete? I think I'm a better athlete than anybody. But you have to have that thinking in this profession.

KK: Now you are one of the most agile big men in professional wrestling, bar none. Take nothing away from anybody else, you do it better perhaps than everybody else. Where do you see yourself over time? Is the Federation Championship a realistic goal in the near future for you?

CHAINZ: Yeah. Realistically, I plan on being in the top four within the next year and then carrying on after that. If it comes down to where, you know, I mean, it's gonna come down to a point where they expose Brian Lee from Chainz on Federation television. If it works for the guys and works for the public, everyone is gonna like it. I mean, it's not a realistic goal for me... it's going to be true.

KK: And if the time comes, and say Shawn Michaels, Stone Cold Steve Austin or whoever the man is at the time, no problems going after someone you might consider a friend?

CHAINZ: Oh, no. Not at all. It's just like a game. I keep going back to sports because this is a sport. It's an athletic event and, I mean, once you get in the ring it's man to man. Once you step out of the ring you can shake hands and go eat dinner. I mean, that's the way I look at it.

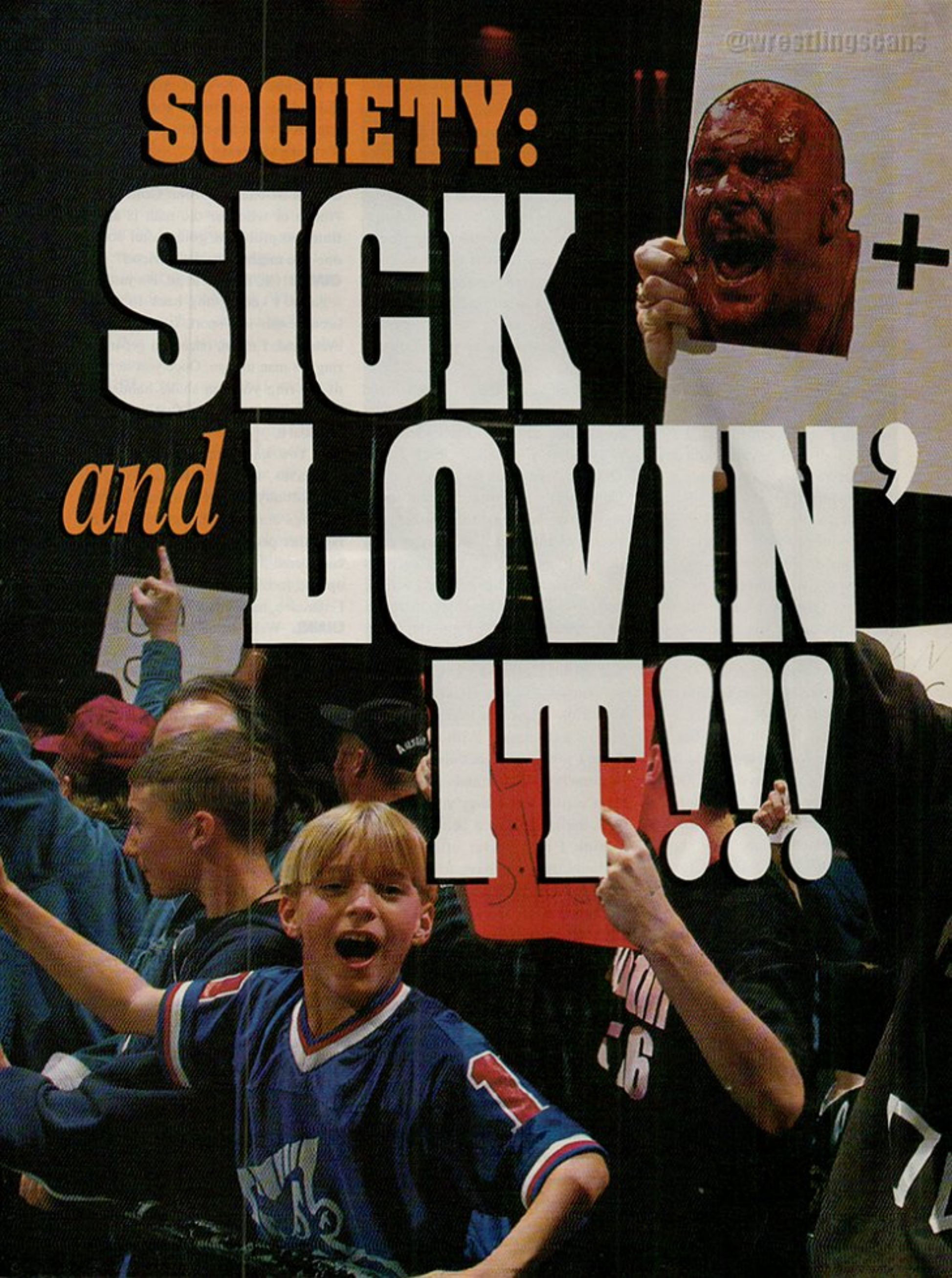
KK: You know that as your level increases, there's always going to be jealousy. There's always bitter feelings among not necessarily you but other people you might once have considered friends. As you start to slide up and move up in your status in the Federation, have you seen any of that?

CHAINZ: Well, actually, you're the one that doesn't see it. If someone is jealous or somebody is trying to stab you in the back or talk behind you—talk out of the side of their mouth is what I say—and give you two different personalities, you're probably the last one to see it. Has it gone on with me? Probably so, but this is a jealous business... that's the way it goes. All in all, the guys are great. But everyone is striving for the top. Any time you have gold at the top, what's a man gonna do? He's wants to stand out. Everybody wants to be the champion. So for me, stepping over someone to do it? Yeah. I mean, it happens.

KK: Everybody does what they do in life for a reason. Sometimes it's for the money, sometimes it's for the fun. Why are you in this business?

CHAINZ: I just love the business. I love everything about it. I love the money, but money didn't start me in the business. I loved performing and I love the crowd response. I just love every aspect of it. ■

SOCIETY: SICK *and* LOVIN' IT!!!



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by Vic Venom

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I'll never forget the time when I was a kid, maybe 13 or 14, and my father took me to my first R-rated movie—*The French Connection*. Man, what a big deal that was. "No one under the age of 17 admitted without a parent or guardian." I was surely going to see somethin' that I wasn't supposed to see. A sneak peak at a female breast... perhaps?

NOTHIN'! "NADDA!" Maybe a curse word here or there, but BIG !@#$% DEAL!!! What a freakin' disappointment!!!

Cut to 1998.

Wake up. Get out of bed. Drag a comb across my head. AND MY 7-YEAR-OLD SON IS WATCHING HOWARD STERN'S *PRIVATE PARTS* at 7:00 in the !@#$% MORNIN'!!! Can you believe this? What do I do? Why, what any good father would do—I sit down and watch it with him!!!

Kidz, that's today's society. *Private Parts* in the mornin' and "South Park" at night. All in the comfort of our own homes. How did this happen? My, just a few decades ago, a flash of Jeannie's belly button was considered criminal. Censor this, censor that. They used to run a disclaimer prior to the start of *All In The Family*, for cryin' out loud!!! Was it the right thing to do? Or were we all just so !@#$ UPTIGHT at the time?!!! Well... you know what I think. We DID and STILL DO (to some extent) have the RUBBER DUCKY stuck up our @#$%!!!

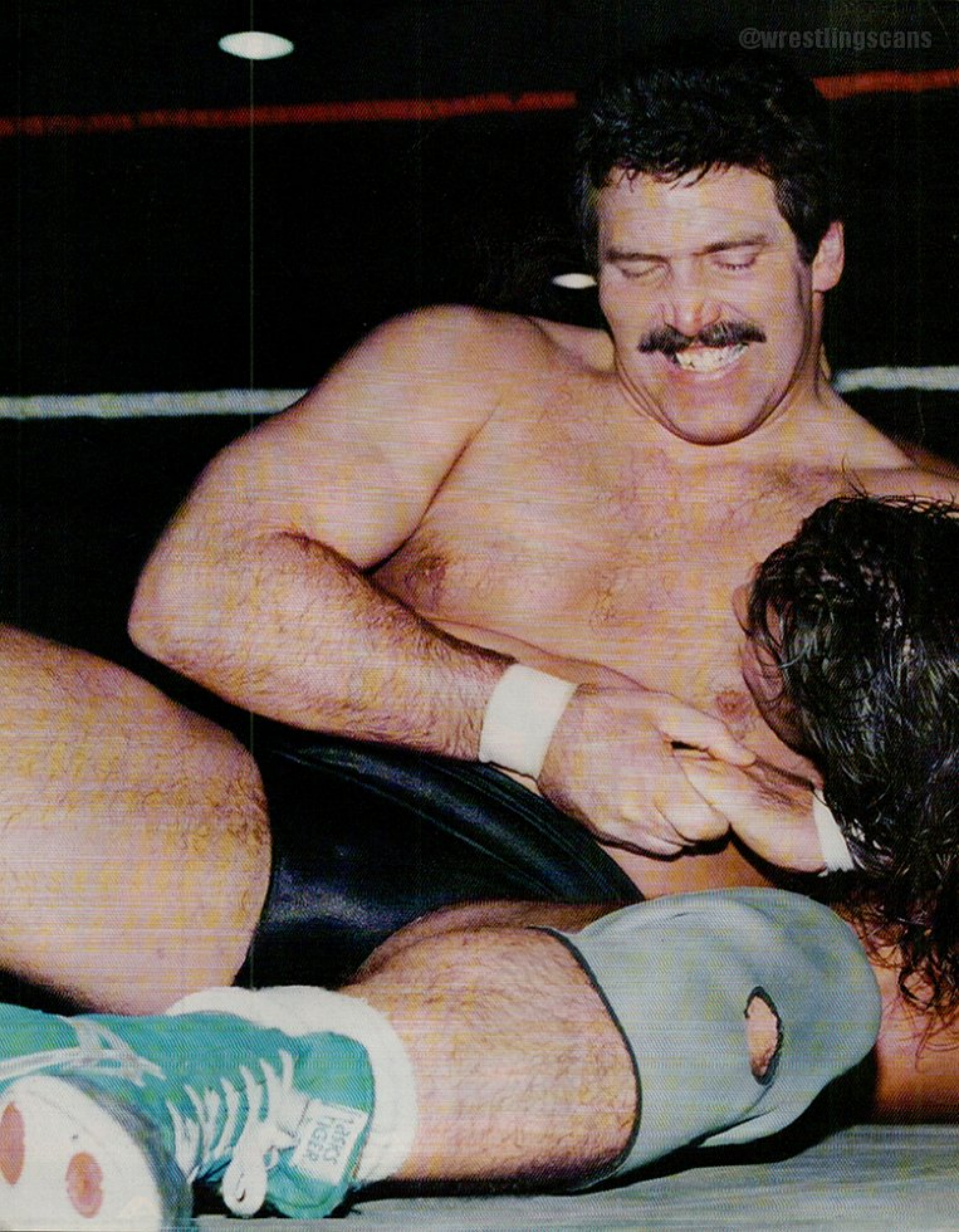
Photo Credit: Archive Photo

Photo Credit: Archive Photo

But, hey—we have come a long way. As a society we have allowed much more to be "acceptable." To me, the turning point was the television series *Dallas*. A night time soap where... well, quite frankly—EVERYBODY WAS DOIN' EVERYBODY ELSE!!! GEEZ, do you remember HOW HOT Victoria Principal was back then? Just knowing there would be a chance of seein' a hint of that cleavage on Friday nights. Man—were those times you just can't forget, OR WHAT?! But, anyway, my point is—as viewers we got more—BECAUSE WE ASKED FOR MORE—WE WANTED MORE!!! Nobody wanted some blue-haired, uptight, censorin' wench tellin' us what was appropriate, or inappropriate, for our eyes to view or our ears to hear! SCREW YOU!!! GIVE IT TO ME, GRAN-MA!!!

Well—it came!!!

From *Dynasty* to *Melrose Place*, more adult-oriented shows hit the boob tube. The level of maturity of viewers somehow increased. BUT make no mistake about it—TEENAGERS as well as ADULTS were watching these shows. *Beverly Hills 90210*? Do you think that @#$! doesn't go on in high school today? THINK AGAIN! It's real life! Accept it, be a part of it... or wrap yourself in a cocoon for the next 50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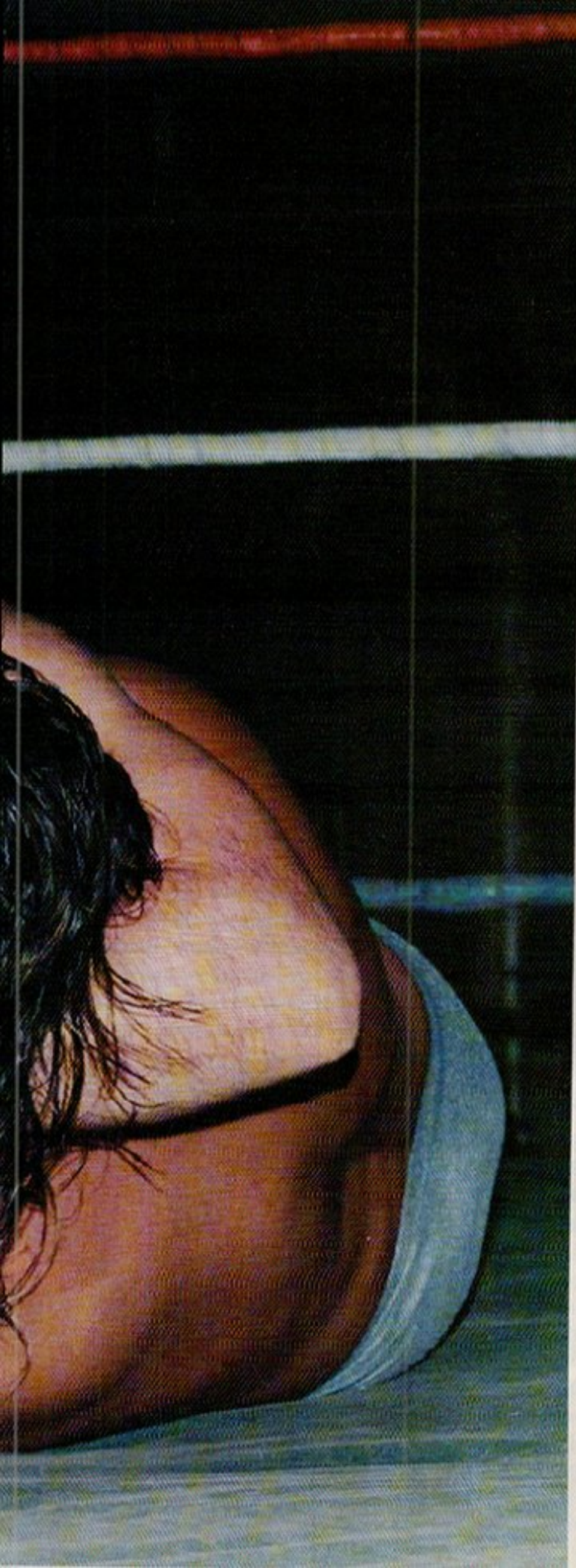

The Third Time Might Be The Harm...

BY KEVIN KELLY

If Dan Severn Tries Ken Shamrock Again

WITH DAN SEVERN NOW ADORNING the World Wrestling Federation roster, the immediate reaction fans have is "Great! Shamrock-Severn 3!"

In the words of Editor-in-Chief Vic Venom, "LET'S NOT GET PANICKY!"

For those of you not familiar with the history between the "World's Most Dangerous Man" and the "Beast" here's a brief synopsis of their rivalry. In the world of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), no two bigger names exist than Shamrock

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While Shamrock endured trial by fire in the World Wrestling Federation—facing the toughest competition the sport has to offer—his former UFC nemesis hasn't dealt with the same nightly rigors. If they were to meet a third time inside the squared circle, it could be to Shamrock's advantage.

and Severn. Their first bout was a classic. Dan had trained for weeks with Al Snow (formerly Leif Cassidy) and Severn was in the best shape of his life. A finely tuned killing machine was a mild descriptor for Severn before this match. Shamrock also prepared intently, as he had always done. The exhaustive battle took its toll on both warriors but Severn escaped with a narrow win.

In the rematch, it was all Shamrock. A front-face lock from hell brought about a tap-out in three minutes. THREE MINUTES!!! That's the equivalent of a Michael Jordan-Max Mini pickup game. A real blowout.

I know... I know... I'll be getting a phone call from the fourth floor asking why I am burying the "Beast". First, telling the truth can sometimes be mistaken for a shovel. Second, even Ray Charles can see that on any given night the roles could be reversed and Severn could be the one getting his hand raised in a rematch. In my opinion, they are both that good. But the facts as they are tell a riveting story. In my mind, do you think the "Beast" is looking for revenge? If so, he might want to hold his horses because a lot has changed over the past year.

While Severn was competing for various promotions around the globe, Shamrock endured a trial by fire here in the World Wrestling Federation, facing the toughest competition the world has to offer. While the "World's Most Dangerous Man" was defeating foes such as Vader, "The Rock" and Faarooq, he gained valuable experience in the catch-as-catch-can or modern professional wrestling style. While being the NWA's World Champion for more than three years, Severn hasn't faced the rigors of night-in, night-out Federation competition, which is the greatest proving ground in the sport.

How quickly Severn will adapt to his new surroundings is the question. We saw Shamrock virtually blossom overnight in his new home. With Dan's skills so similar to Ken's, the break-in period may be brief. Complementary backgrounds in similar disciplines tell me that the diagram for victory could be what has carried Ken Shamrock to the elite status in the Federation. He is one of a handful of superstars who has that extra gear for the home stretch of a match that he can kick in at the right time. That added surge is brought about by emotion.

Emotionally they are alike as well, with Severn also having a tenuous grip on control like his UFC adversary. The fire that burns inside Shamrock has carried him to victory on a number of occasions. Can the true rage be harnessed by the calm exterior that Severn sports? Without some control, Shamrock would be disqualified every night and jailed in most states for the acts he could commit. If havoc is the goal, Dan can be deadly. If gold is in his Federation future—just like Shamrock—he must restrict the boundaries of his temper.

Another point on the subject of Shamrock-Severn. Fans must realize that these two men are the biggest stars to ever compete in the UFC and they are now both in the World Wrestling Federation. It's like having Mark McGwire and Ken Griffey, Jr. on the same team. Each would have monster home run numbers because there is no one to pitch around. Occasionally one of them might have to take an out for the team, but that's part of the game. As long as egos are checked at the clubhouse door, everything would be fine. A can't lose scenario, right? Wrong!

This plan to have both Shamrock and Severn on the same roster could blow up in the Federation's face because, just like the home run champions, they are competitors. Each wants to be the best and it might just take the third chapter of their career-long saga to be finished before the outcome of the story is known. Severn knows that Shamrock got the best of him that night in the octagon and so does Shamrock. Before we throw these two into the lion's den against each other, let's see how the "Beast" fares against the World Wrestling Federation.

With all the experience Shamrock has in the Federation, he has for the moment advanced beyond his nemesis. Time will be an ally if Severn doesn't rush things with his old foe. But if the "Beast" gets "panicky", the World's Most Dangerous Man could make Severn's time here short. Could that same temper cloud his judgment and force what many feel is an inevitable confrontation to complete the triumvirate? If the time isn't right, the third meeting could be the last for one of them. ■

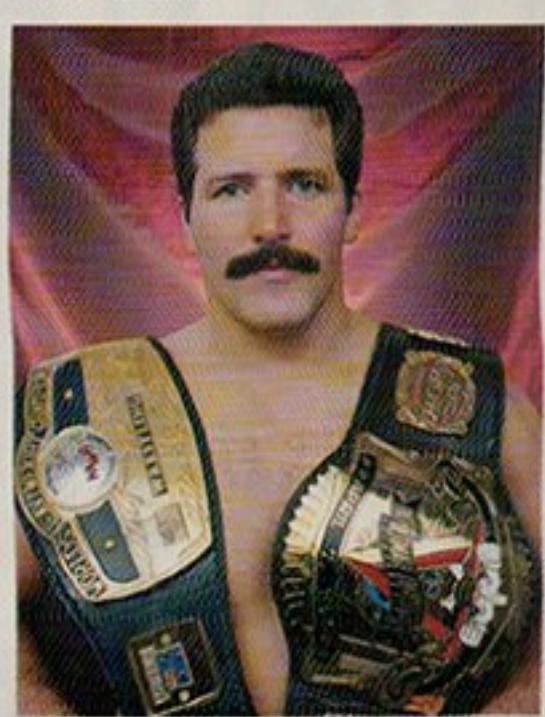
Photo Credit: Bill Apter/PWI

(Clockwise from bottom) While the World's Most Dangerous Man can easily lose control of his rage, the "Beast" has harnessed his to perfection in the Octagon. It will be interesting to see how the former UFC and current NWA champion fares in the Federation.

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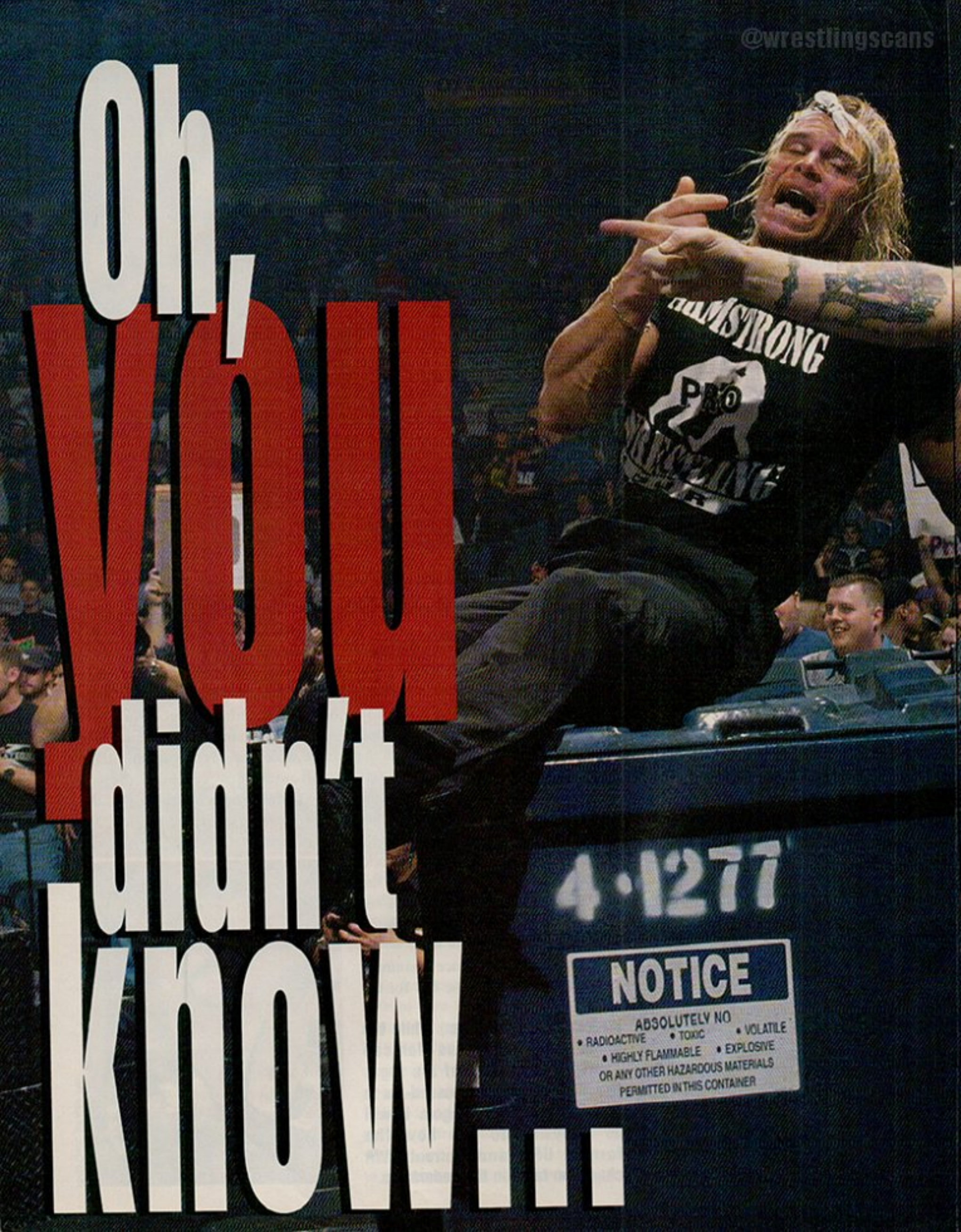
Oh, You didn't know...



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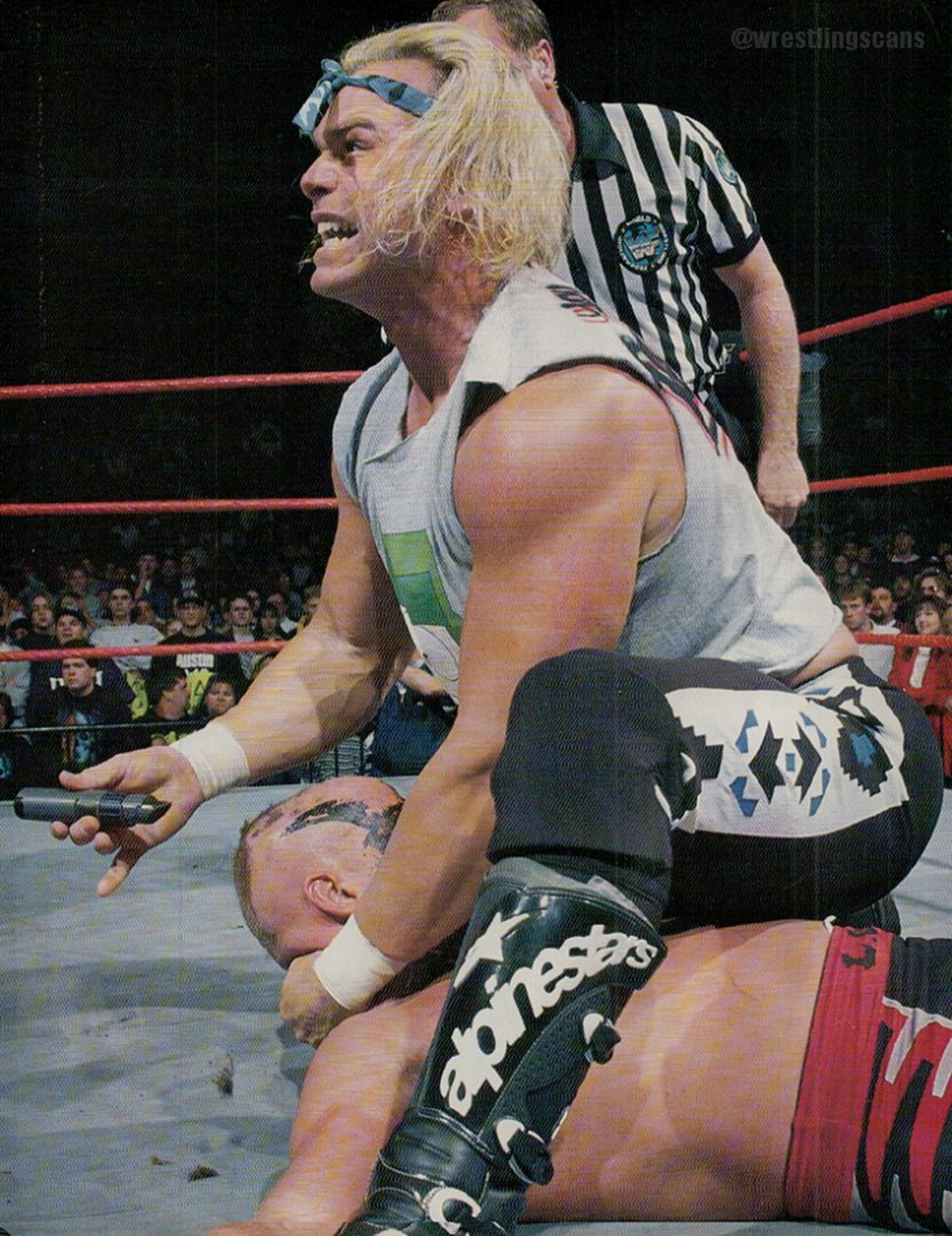
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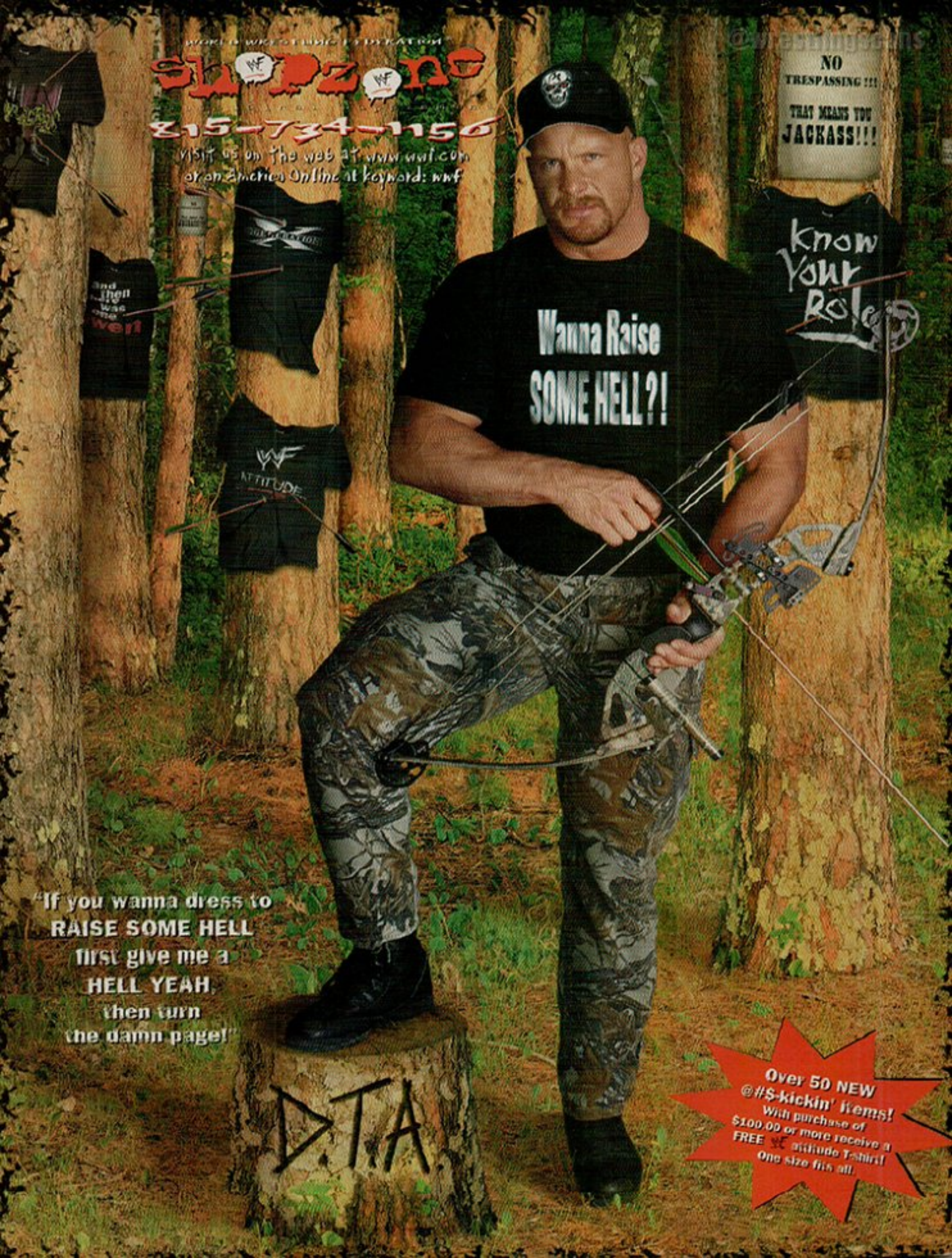
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THAT MEANS YOU JACKASS!!!
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Wanna Raise SOME HELL?!
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"If you wanna dress to RAISE SOME HELL first give me a HELL YEAH, then turn the damn page!"
DTA
Over 50 NEW @#$-kickin' Items!
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One size fits all.

WANNA BE LIKE THE TOUGHEST S.O.B.? YOU GOTTA DRESS THE PART!

A. Pop The Top On Your Own Can of Whoop-Ass
Open up a can of Whoop-Ass and see what you get! A Stone Cold T-shirt with Steve's eyes blazing and logo on front, 100% Pure Whoop-Ass on back in your very own can of Whoop-Ass. (T-Shirt and silver metal can packaged together.) Black. 100% cotton.
ONE SIZE FITS ALL #13004 $30.00

B. NEW! Steve Austin "Unofficial State Bird" T-Shirt
Front: Texas' Unofficial State "Bird" Stone Cold-style!
Back: "Don't mess with Stone Cold". Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #13034 $25.00

C. Austin 3:16 T-Shirt
The one that started it all! If you don't own this shirt by now, you got a @#$%! problem! Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #13001 $25.00

D. Austin 3:16 Baseball Cap
Skull on the front and Austin 3:16 on back. Embroidered. Black. 100% brushed cotton.
#13002 $25.00

E. Stone Cold "Other Side Jackass" T-Shirt:
Check out the back of this T-shirt, Son: Stone Cold face/skull design. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: L XL XXL*
#13019 $25.00

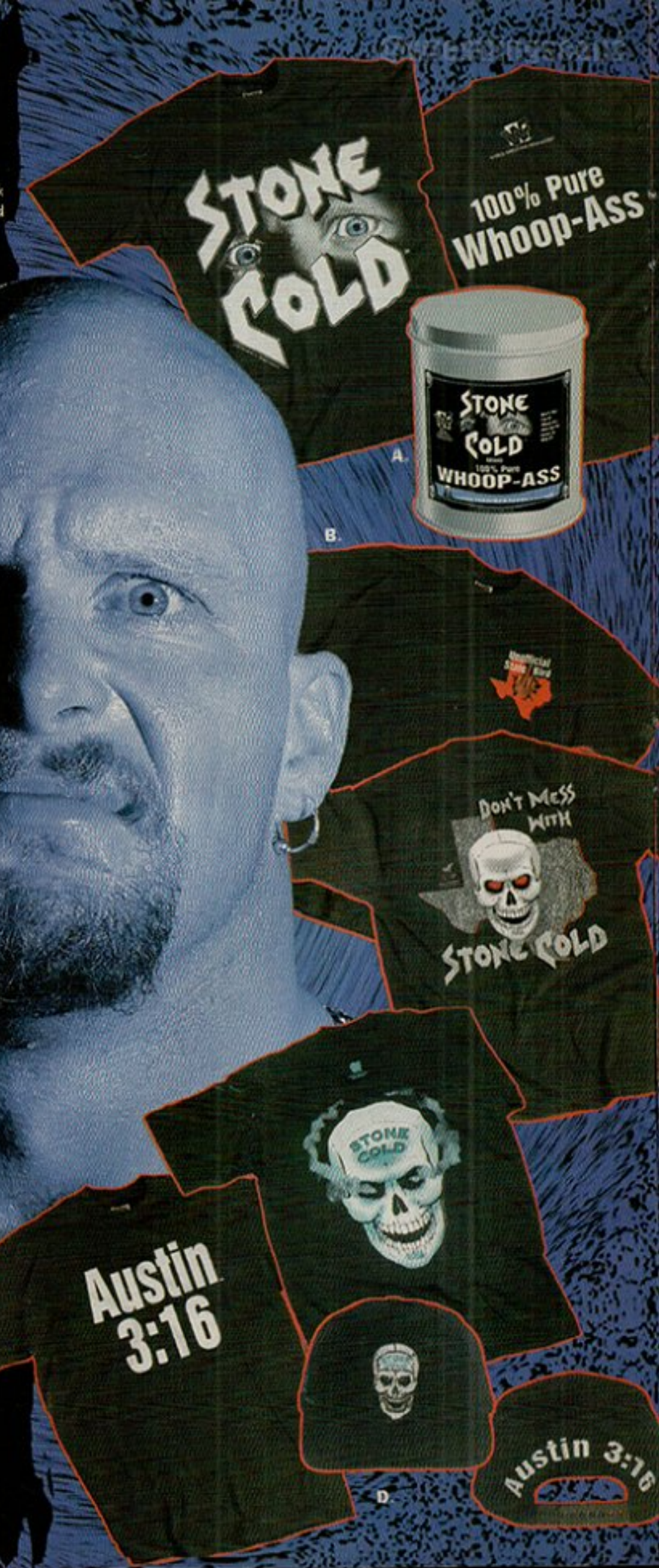
F. NEW! "HELL YEAH" T-Shirt
"Wanna Raise Some Hell?!" on the front, "HELL YEAH" on the back. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: L XL XXL*
#13033 $25.00

G. NEW! Stone Cold University SCU Baseball Cap
Front: SCU Logo. Back: Class of 3:16. ENROLL NOW! Black. 100% brushed cotton twill.
#13043 $25.00

H. NEW! Stone Cold University SCU T-Shirt
Enroll in the Stone Cold University. Whoop-Ass 101 on back and Class of 3:16 on the sleeves.
SIZES: L XL XXL
#13035 $25.00

I. NEW! Austin #1 Hell Raiser Vest
Back: "#1 Hell Raiser", with skull and crossbones design. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL
#13042 $46.99

J. NEW! Austin "HELL YEAH" Baseball Cap
Embroidered. Black. 100% brushed cotton twill.
#13044 $25.00



E.

Other Side
JACKASS!

F.

Wanna Raise
SOME HELL?!

HELL YEAH

G.

STONE COLD
SCU
UNIVERSITY

H.

STONE COLD
SCU
UNIVERSITY

CLASS OF 3:16

I.

STONE COLD

WHOOP-ASS 101

J.

#1 Hell Raiser

Austin 3:16

HELL YEAH!!!

STONE COLD
SCU

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WANNA RAISE SOME HELL?! OOOOHHHHH HELL YEAH!!!

A. NEW! Austin Wall Hanging.
Austin face/skull image on woven cotton. #13045 $49.99

B. NEW! Austin Fanny Pack
Black. Embroidered PVC. #13060 $16.00

C. NEW! Austin Golf Shirt
Austin 3:16 skull design embroidered on chest. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL 13058 $26.99

D. NEW! Austin Windbreaker
Stone Cold logo embroidered on front. Black nylon.
SIZES: M L XL XXL #13064 $36.00

E. NEW! Steve Austin Baseball Jersey
Stone Cold blue pinstripes on a white jersey with Austin 3:16 on front, and Stone Cold 3:16 on back.
SIZES: M L XL XXL #13046 #$14.50

F. NEW! Austin Truck/Car Mat
Austin's #1 Hellraiser truck/car mat. Includes two mats. Fit most vehicles. Black rubber. #13048 $35.00

G. NEW! Austin S.O.B.-3:16 Decorative License Plate
Skull design with white type on black metal.
#13049 $7.99

H. NEW! Austin 3:16 License Plate Holder
Printed on black metal frame. "Protected by Austin 3:16 Whoop-Ass."
#13050 $6.99

I. NEW! "HELL YEAH" Skull Necklace
"Hell Yeah" skull pendant with moving jaw comes with leather necklace. Silver finish.
#13056 $8.00

J. NEW! Austin 3:16 Flag
Austin skull design in front of classic Austin 3:16. Size: 16" X 24".
#13047 $16.00

K. NEW! Austin Finger Key Ring
"And that's the bottom line...'cause Stone Cold said so." Black leather. Silver finish. #13053 $9.99

L. NEW! Stone Cold Clock
Austin skull design on clock face. Antique silver finish.
Size: 4¾" X 3½" #13052 $15.99

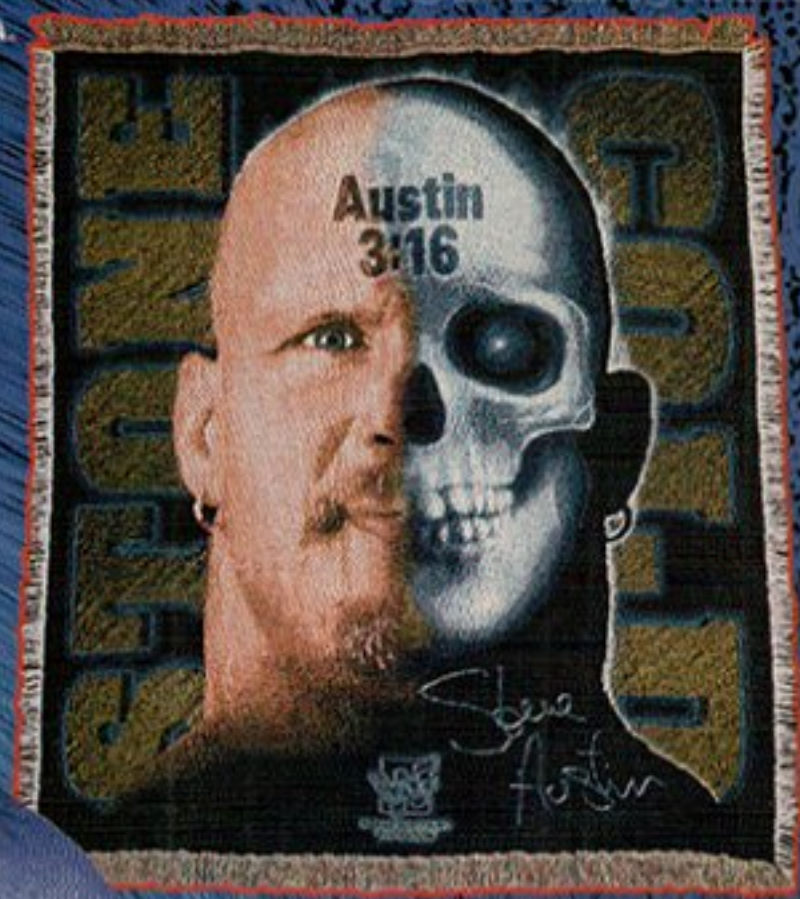
M. NEW! Austin Dog Tag
Black skull design on silver tag, chain included. #13063 $8.00

N. Austin Stone Cold Ring
It's a "stunner". Sterling silver with skull. Sizes: 9, 10, 11
#13018 $39.99

O. NEW! Austin Backpack
SCU Stone Cold University embroidered logo on black PVC backpack. #13059 $29.99

P. NEW! Steve Austin Beer Koozies
Sold separately. Can cooler with rubberized bottom. $5.00 each.
#13038 Stone Cold Beer (Black)
#13039 100% Pure Whoop-Ass Ale (Red)
#13040 Austin 3:16 Lite (Blue)

Q. NEW! Steve Austin Wall Banner
Line your room with life-size attitude!!! Polyvinyl. Size: 36" x 79.5". Four reinforced grommets with rope.
#13041 $30.00



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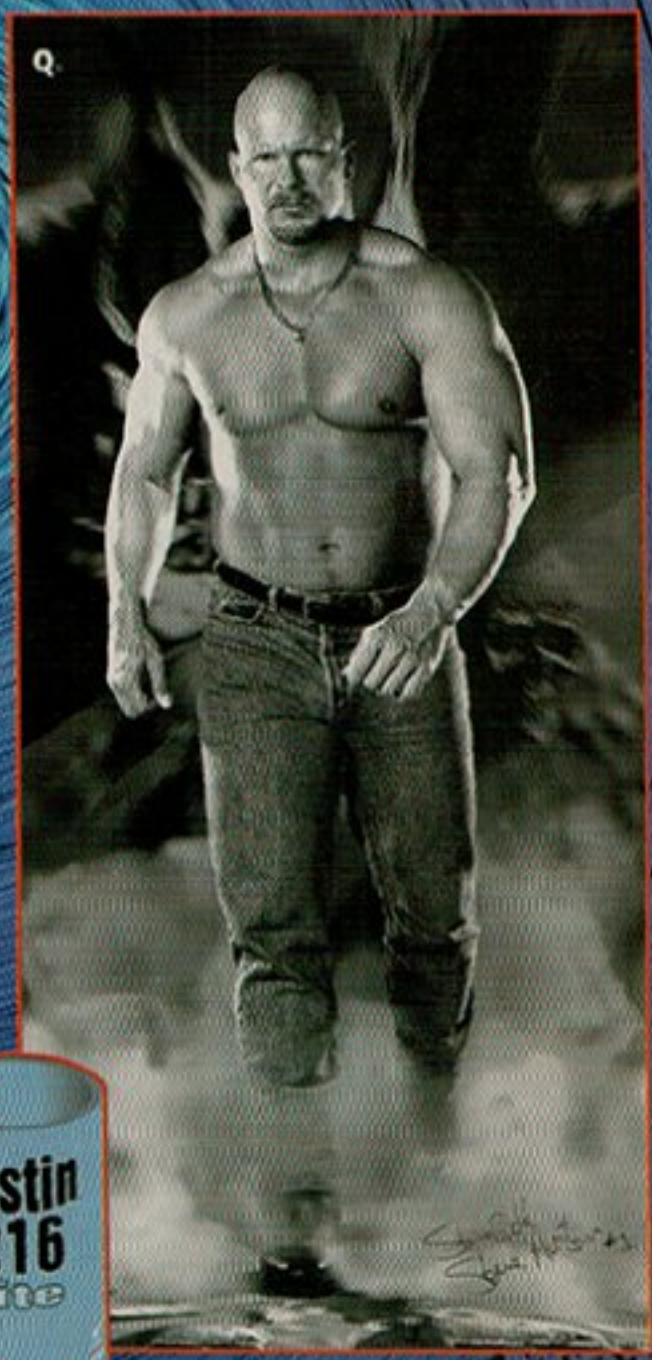

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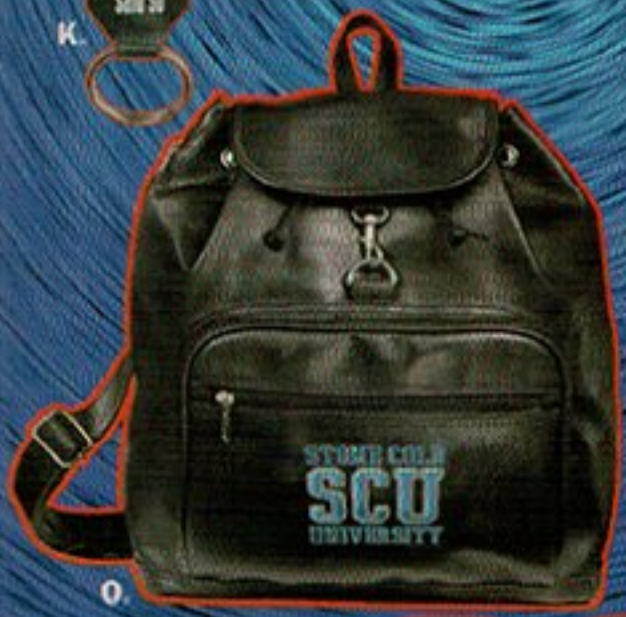

P.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT...AWAKEN!

A. NEW! Undertaker Wall Hanging
Image of Undertaker on woven cotton.
#03040 $49.99

B. NEW! Undertaker Decorative License Plate
DED-MAN. Black metal.
#03041 $7.99

C. NEW! Undertaker License Plate Holder
"Touch this car and you're dead." Black metal frame.
#03042 $6.99

D. NEW! Undertaker Flag
New Undertaker logo with cross. Black nylon.
SIZE: 16" X 24" #03043 $16.00

E. NEW! Undertaker Logo T-Shirt
"Lord of Darkness" on the back.
Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #03036 $25.00

F. NEW! Undertaker Baseball Cap
Embroidered Undertaker logo on the front. "To Hell and Back" on the back.
Black. 100% brushed cotton twill.
#03038 $25.00

G. NEW! Undertaker Denim Vest
WWF Attitude/"To Hell and Back" logo on front. Undertaker Grim Reaper design on back. Black denim.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #03037 $46.99

H. NEW! Undertaker Pendant
Silver finish pendant with leather necklace.
#03047 $8.00

I. NEW! Undertaker T-Shirt
Undertaker Grim Reaper on front.
"To Hell and Back" on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #03039 $25.00

FEEL THE POWER OF KANE

J. "Raise Some KANE" T-Shirt
"Welcome to Hell" on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #44002 $25.00

K. KANE "Kiss My Ash" T-Shirt
Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #44001 $25.00

L. NEW! Kane Mask
As close as you'll ever want to get to being KANE.
Plastic. *#44003 $6.99*

RAW IS WAR WEAR

M. Raw T-Shirt
Raw Is War logo on front. War Zone/Federation logo on back.
Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #00019 $25.00

N. Raw Baseball Cap
Embroidered Raw Is War logo on front. Black. 100% cotton.
#00018 $25.00

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DX SHOWSTOPPAS: "YOU EITHER GOT IT OR YOU DON'T"!

A. Shawn Michaels "Hey Wuss Boy!" T-Shirt
"Hey wuss boy!" on front. "After I beat you, I'm gonna take your girlfriend" on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #01047 $25.00

B. NEW! D-Generation X Cap
D-Generation X design embroidered on front. "You make the rules, we'll break 'em" embroidered on back. Black. 100% brushed cotton twill.
#42009 $25.00

C. NEW! Triple H T-Shirt
With Hunter's "seal of approval" on the front. Black. 100% cotton.
ONE SIZE FITS ALL #31003 $25.00

D. NEW! D-Generation X Denim Jacket
"Real" degenerates wear denim! Federation attitude and DX logos embroidered on front. D-Generation X logo screened on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #42004 $49.99

E. NEW! DX Belt Buckle
Silver finish buckle with D-Generation X logo. Belt not included.
#42007 $9.99

F. NEW! DX Decorative License Plate
DGN•R8 license plate for degenerates only. Green type on black metal.
#42005 $7.99

G. NEW! DX License Plate Holder
Protected by DX. "You make the rules... we'll break 'em". Black metal frame.
#42006 $6.99

H. DX "S*ck It" T-Shirt
D-Generation X logo on front. "Two words S*CK IT" on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #42001 $25.00

I. Chyna T-Shirt
If you'd rather "be in Chyna", buy the shirt. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #30001 $25.00

J. D-Generation X Pendant Necklace
Silver finish D-Generation X pendant on leather necklace. *#42010 $9.00*

K. D-Generation X T-Shirt
DX logo on the front. "If at first you don't succeed, COME BACK AND WE'LL BEAT YOU AGAIN!" and DX's signatures on back. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #42003 $25.00

COME GET SOME ATTITUDE

L. NEW! WF Attitude Windbreaker
Federation attitude logo embroidered on front. Black nylon.
SIZES: M L XL XXL #00057 $36.00

M. NEW! WF Attitude T-shirt
Federation attitude logo on front. "Come Get Some" on the back. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: S M L XL XXL #00054 $25.00*

N. NEW! WF Attitude Fanny Pack
Federation attitude logo emblazoned on the pack. Black PVC. *#00059 $12.99*

O. NEW! WF Attitude Golf Shirt
Federation attitude logo embroidered on front. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: M L XL XXL #00060 $26.99*

P. NEW! WF Attitude Cap
Federation attitude logo embroidered on front. "Come Get Some" embroidered on the back. Black. 100% brushed cotton twill.
#00055 $25.00

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A. Legends Series 1 Action Figures
The most famous legends of the World Wrestling Federation®. Many have claimed to be legends, but only a select few are. These collectible figures come with display base and exclusive biography card. Fully poseable figures. Sold separately. $13.00 each. Size: 7"high.
#51001 Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka *#49001 Andre The Giant*
#52001 Captain Lou Albano *#50001 Classy Freddie Blassie*

B. Ripped and Ruthless Action Figures
This awesome, muscle-packed series includes some of the most popular superstars in the World Wrestling Federation today. Fully poseable figure. Comes with display base and biography card. Sold separately. $13.00 each. Size: 7"high.
#11006 Mankind *#13051 Steve Austin*
#03049 Undertaker *#05011 Goldust*

C. NEW! Owen T-Shirt
"And then there was Owen" on the front. "The Black Hart Owen Hart... Still Beatin" on the back. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: S M L XL XXL* *#22002 $25.00*

D. NEW! Goldust FU T-Shirt
"FU" on the front. "Forever Unchained" on the back. Black. 100% cotton.
ONE SIZE FITS ALL *#05009 $25.00*

E. NEW! Legion of Doom Bandana
Legion of Doom logo. Pigment dyed. 100% cotton. *Size: 22"X22"* *#17004 $8.00*

F. NEW! Legion of Doom T-Shirt
L.O.D. barbed wire logo on the front. "WHAT A RUSH" on the back. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: S M L XL XXL* *#17006 $25.00*

G. Slammers Action Figures Series 1
Get in on the action with the first series of Slammers action figures with devastating finishing moves and bone-crunching sounds. Sold separately. $10.00 each. Size: 6" high.
#45001 Faarooq *#13062 Steve Austin*
#03048 Undertaker *#11005 Mankind*

H. Tag Team/Manager Series
Collect them all and get in on the action. Sold separately. $10.00 each. Size: 6"high.
#28002 DOA *#46001 Goldust/Marlena*
#47001 Chyna/Hunter *#48001 Truth Commission*

I. RAW IS WAR™ Monster Ring
Build you own "War Zone" and experience the WF attitude. Figures not included. *#00047 $20.00*

J. NEW! King of the Ring™ Mini Ring and Figures
Create your own royal chaos with this new King of the Ring mini ring. Includes six figures. *#00061 $16.00*

K. WrestleMania® Box Set
Commemorates the first 13 WrestleManias. This is your opportunity to own a piece of history. This is an incredible value offering 13 tapes in one box set. Each tape's duration: 3 hours. *#00041 $79.99*

L. WF The Music CD, Volume 2
Now you can listen to all your favorite superstars' entrance music any time. Featuring 15 songs. *#00035 $14.95*

M. NEW! Rocky Maivia T-Shirt
"Know Your Role" on the front. "The Rock" on the back. Black. 100% cotton.
ONE SIZE FITS ALL *#35002 $25.00*

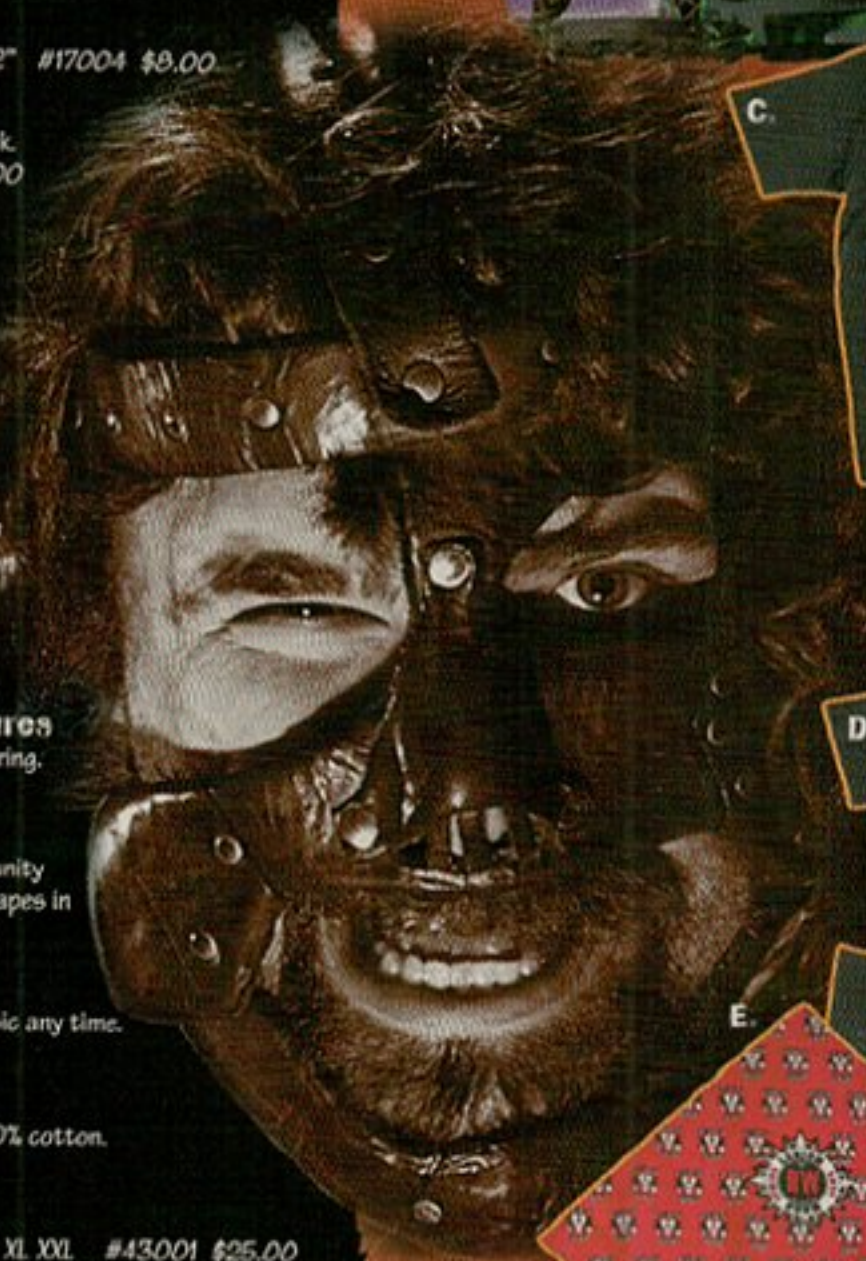
N. Cactus Jack T-Shirt
Wanted DEAD. Cactus Jack. Black. 100% cotton. *SIZES: S M L XL XXL* *#43001 $25.00*

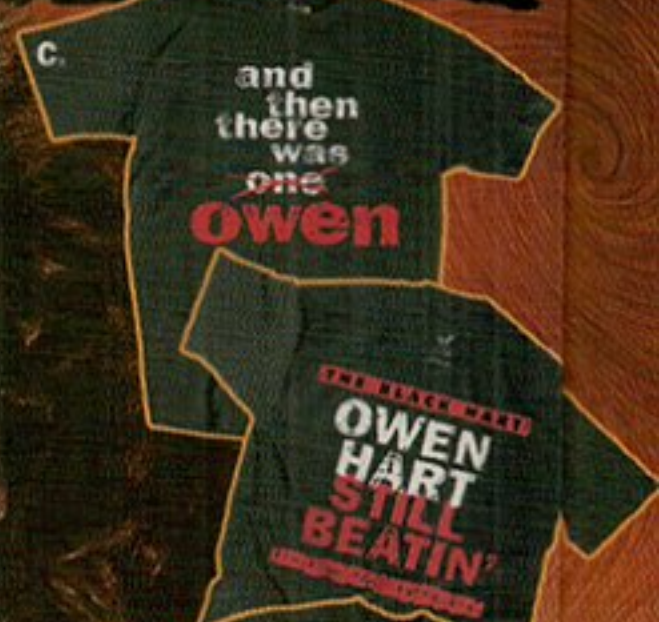
O. Dude Love T-Shirt
Be the "Coolest Cat" in your Dude Love T-shirt. Tie dye. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL *#26001 $25.00*

P. NEW! Mankind Happy Face Boxers
Mankind's signature happy face design repeated all over. Pigment dyed. Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL *#11004 $14.99*

Q. NEW! Dude Love Children's T-Shirt
Tie dye. 100% cotton. *SIZES: 6-8, 10-12, 14-16* *#26004 $12.99*

R. NEW! Dude Love Bib
Tie dye cotton terrycloth. *#26003 $11.00*





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RAW IS WAR

RAW IS WAR

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WrestleMania

WrestleMania

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WANTED DEAD

CACTUS JACK

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Know Your Role

THE ROCK

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A. NEW! "because we can" T-Shirt
"because we can" on the front.
Boots and skirt design on the back.
Black. 100% cotton.
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B. NEW! Headbangers Boxers
Mosh into something more comfortable.
Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: S M L XL XXL #32004 $14.99

C. NEW! "Pierce This" T-Shirt
Headbangers neon logo on the front.
Pierced tongue design on the back.
Black. 100% cotton.
SIZES: L XL XXL #32003 $25.00

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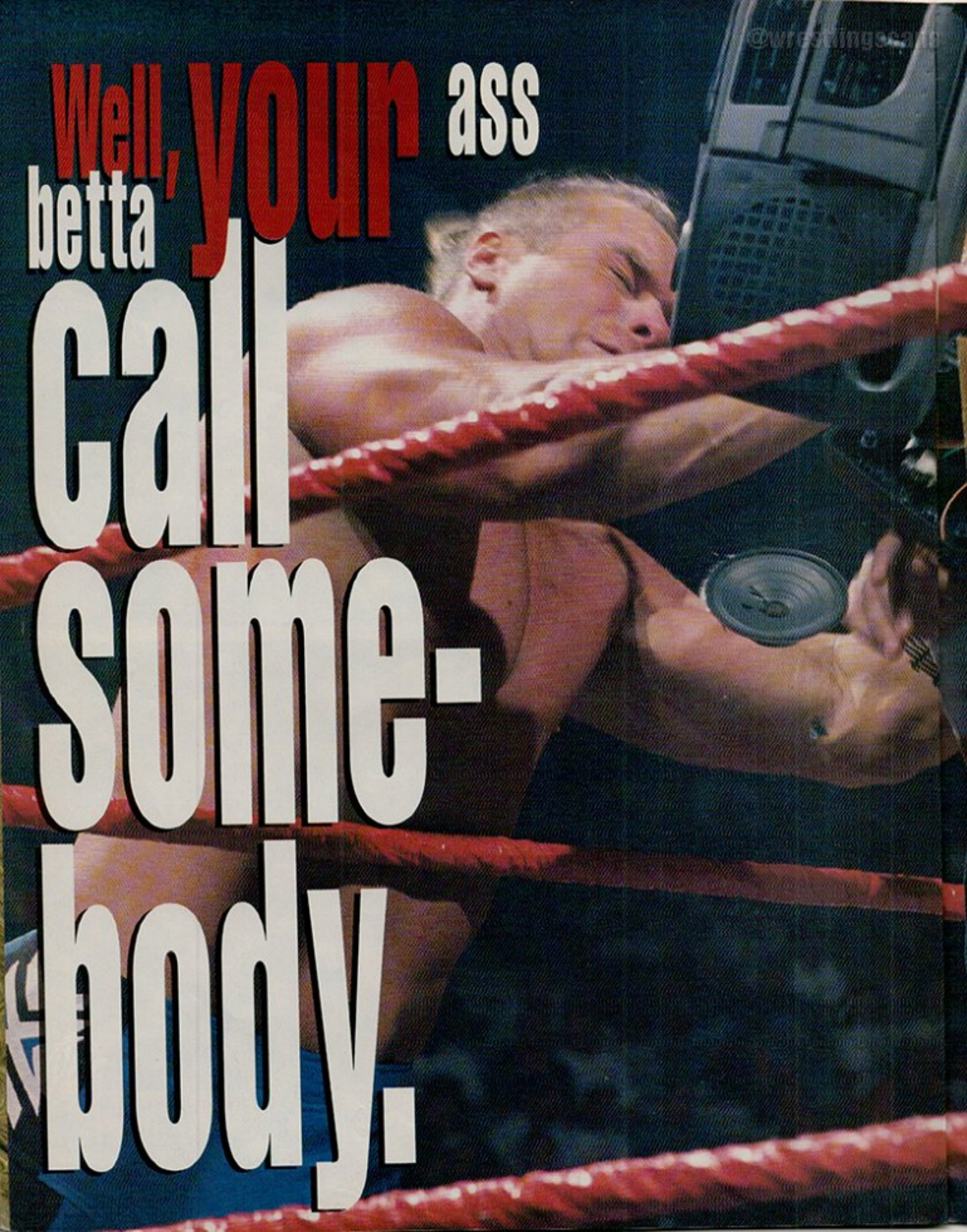
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Well, your ass
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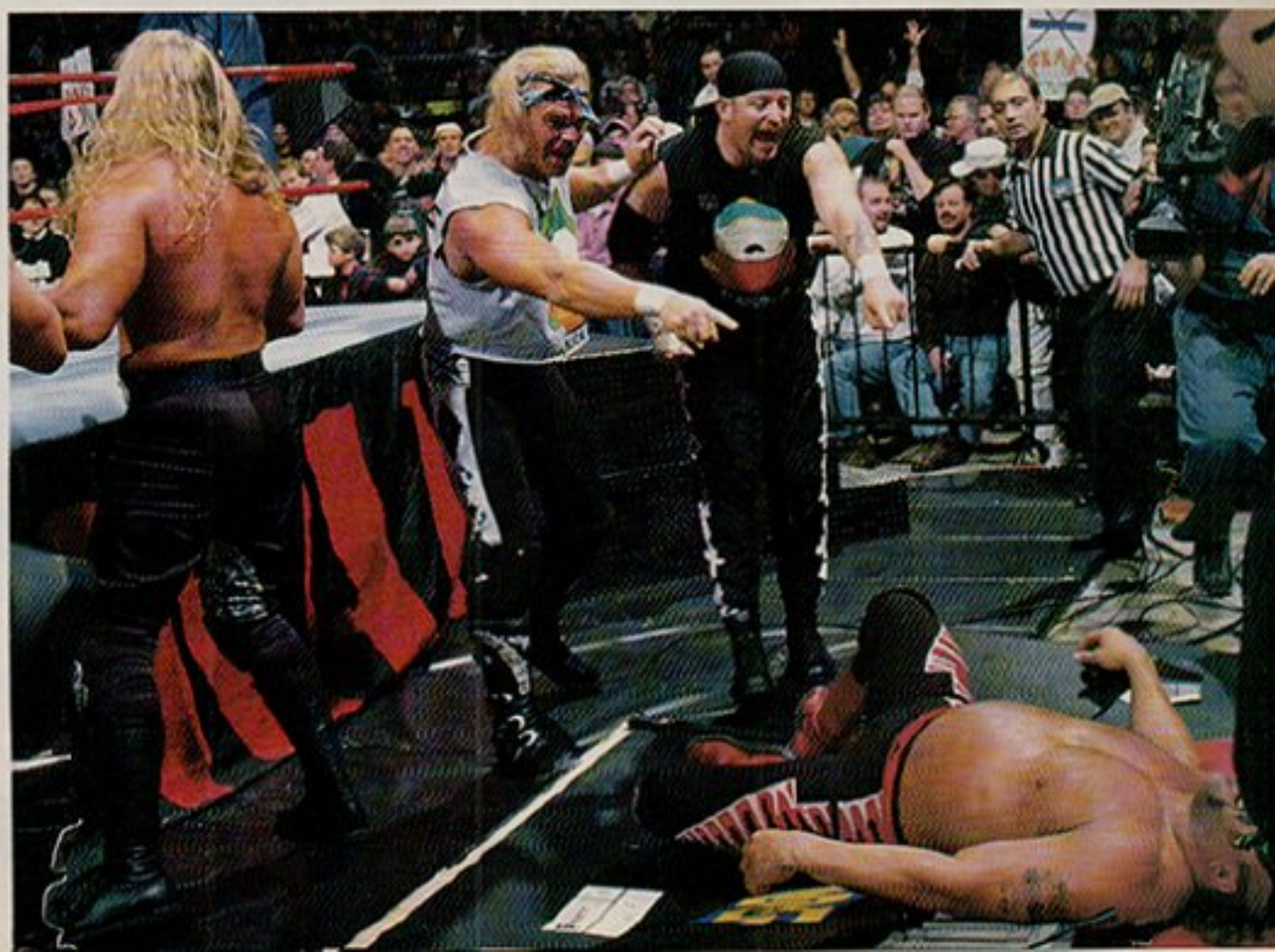

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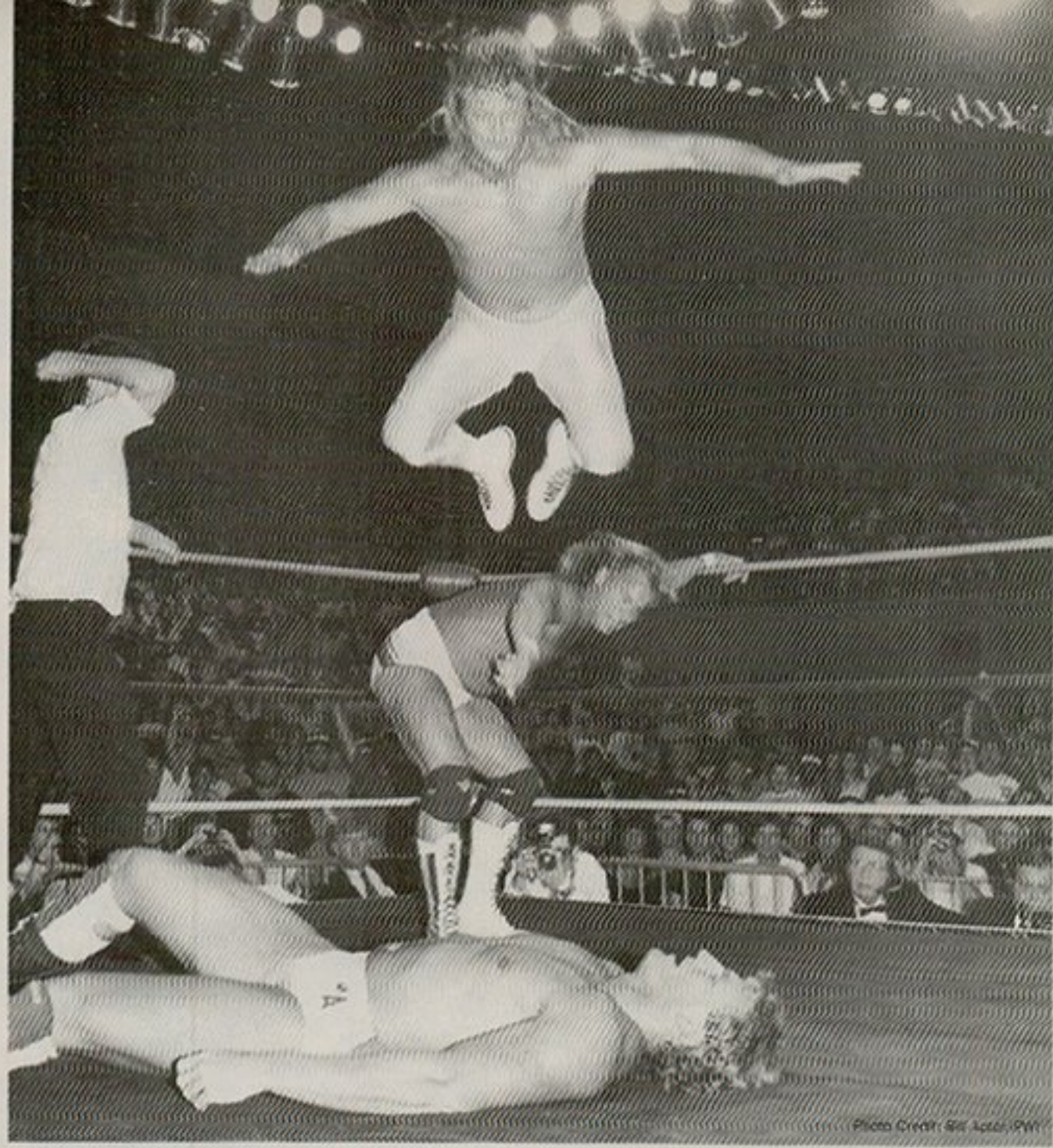


It's no accident that the Rocket Launcher, as shown both left and right, is executed by two renditions of the Midnight Express. As with any championship team, the players may change, but the winning tradition remains the same.

RUNAWAY TRAIN: THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

By Lou Gianfriddo

Where They Were... Where They're Heading

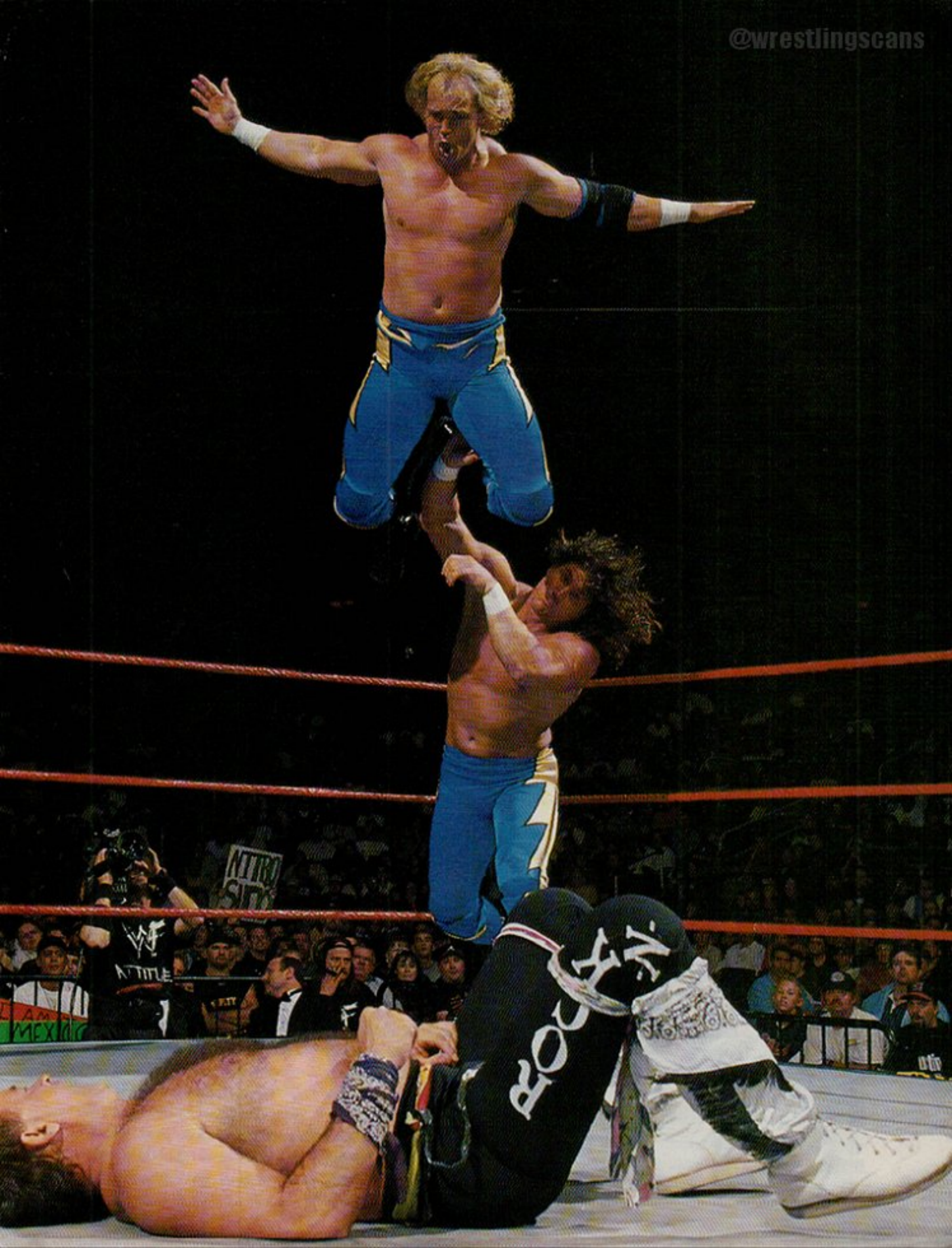
James E. Cornette—the self-proclaimed "World's Greatest Manager" and the World Wrestling Federation's "Prince of Polyester"—has done it again. Cornette has logged more miles in the wrestling business than an over-the-road tractor-trailer driver, and now he's dug into his resources and produced a "new" Midnight Express—pooling the talents of Bob Holly and Bart Gunn, anointing them the New Midnight Express, the newest rendition of an old tradition that Cornette hopes will thrust tag team wrestling into the new millennium.

Certainly Holly and Gunn possess the wrestling knowledge to make Cornette's dream a reality. Bart Gunn, for instance, is a former three-time Federation Tag Team Title co-holder. While known for his skills as a singles superstar and a professional NASCAR driver, Holly is also a former Tag Team Champion. As a unit, they are what Cornette has always meant the Express to be—two fast, able-bodied, upwardly mobile athletes who risk personal well-being to achieve victory.

In the past, Cornette's dream of such wrestling bravado and brass-tacks wrestling generalship has enabled various versions of the Midnight Express to succeed in mat wars in such organizations as the National Wrestling Alliance (NWA), the Mid-South wrestling territory in Louisiana and World Class Championship Wrestling, at one time headquartered in Dallas.

In general, most wrestling fans think of the Midnight Express in terms of Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton. While they certainly attained monumental success in several wrestling promotions, they were not the originals. According to Cornette, they were extensions of his vision of the Midnight Express itself.

The team didn't start as a conven-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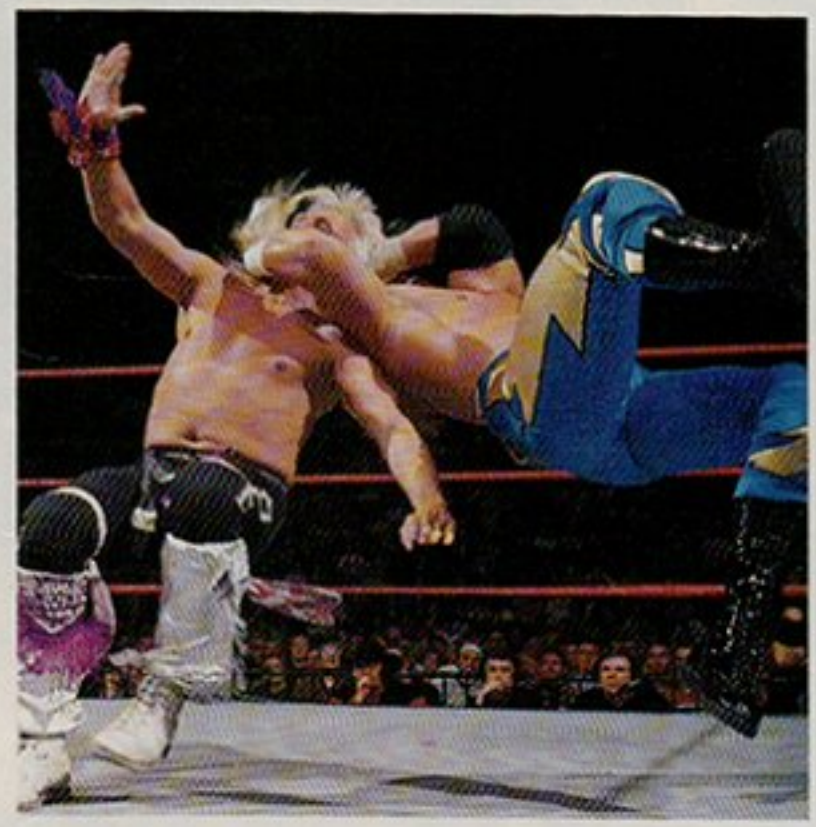
tional duo. Cornette says, "The original Midnight Express were Dennis Condrey, Randy Rose and Norvell Austin, forming a three-man team a la another groundbreaking team, the Fabulous Freebirds. This version of the Express wrestled all over the South from 1980-1982."

In late 1983, Condrey was wrestling in the Memphis area, and in that territory as well was a tremendous wrestler from Huntsville, Alabama, named "Beautiful" Bobby Eaton and a rookie manager by the name of Jim Cornette. When talent scouts from Mid-South wrestling based in Louisiana visited Memphis, they recommended that Condrey and Eaton form a team. The two were friends of Cornette and in need of a manager, so the deal was made. Using Cornette's old team name, the Midnight Express, the trip set off to the Mid-South in November 1983 ready to make history.

"It was a rough part of the country," says Cornette. "We had to fight the wrestlers AND the fans every night. But by March we defeated Mr. Wrestling II and Magnum TA for the Mid-South Tag Team Title and held the belts most of the year."



But it wasn't the championship that put the Midnight Express on the map. It was two sets of opponents they faced while wrestling in the area. In March 1984 the Midnight Express began their rivalry with the Rock 'N' Roll Express, instigating a series of legendary bouts which would turn into the biggest-drawing, most exciting and the longest-lasting tag team rivalry of the last 20 years. The other set of opponents established the Express' reputation inside the business as box office dynamite.

"Bill Watts was the president of Mid-South Sports," Cornette remembers. "He had been retired from the ring for about three years. He had been by far the most popular wrestler in the area and was respected and feared by the fans and other wrestlers. Well, you just knew we'd have problems."

An argument between Cornette and Watts ended up with James E. getting the taste slapped out of his mouth and the Express attacking Watts and beating him bloody. Watts decided to come out of retirement for his "Last Stampede" and Cowboy Bill picked the Junkyard Dog as his partner. That matchup headlined cards in the 14 major cities in the Louisiana-Oklahoma-Texas-Mississippi-Arkansas territory and set attendance records in every one, some of which still stand.

"We had almost 25,000 people in New Orleans," Cornette said. "We sold out Oklahoma City AND Tulsa in the same day—over 22,000 people. That record will never be broken. We

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tional duo. Cornette says, "The original Midnight Express were Dennis Condrey, Randy Rose and Norvell Austin, forming a three-man team a la another groundbreaking team, the Fabulous Freebirds. This version of the Express wrestled all over the South from 1980-1982."

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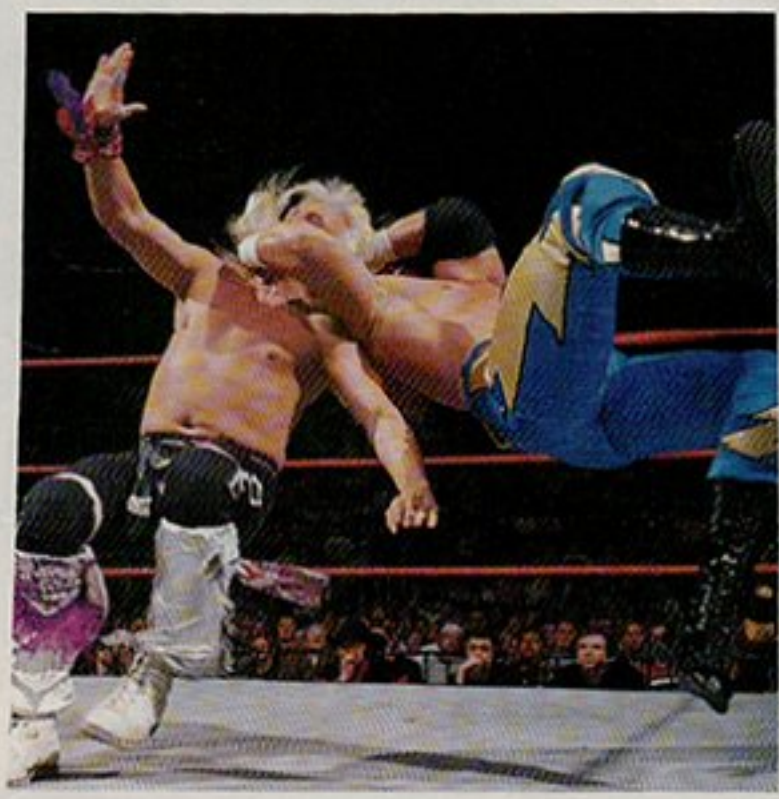

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Photo Credit: Bill Apter/PWI

outdrew Kenny Rogers in Little Rock. They were still lined up around the Coliseum in Houston when they locked the doors. In Jackson, Mississippi, they had to bribe the Fire Marshall not to stop the show. Those matches made our national reputation by showing promoters we could draw crowds, even if they came to see us get killed."

After losing to the Rock 'N' Roll Express in the first-ever tag team scaffold match, Cornette's Express moved to World Class Wrestling based in Dallas in December 1984. The Express won the American Tag Team Title from the Fantastics and reigned for almost six months. But losing those belts combined with frustration over the matchmaker's refusal to sign them against the Von Erich brothers caused the Midnights and Cornette to move again—this time to Jim Crockett Promotions, the largest member of the National Wrestling Alliance and a featured spot on national television for the first time. It was here that they became instrumental in changing the face of tag team wrestling.

"The Rock 'N' Roll Express came from Louisiana and we came from Dallas in July 1985, but they got the title match first," Cornette recalls. "The Rock 'N' Roll Express beat Ivan Koloff and Krusher Kruschev for the NWA World Tag Titles, and it took us six months to get a title match with them.

But the fans began demanding an Express showdown and in January 1986, the first NWA World Tag Title bout between the two teams drew a turn-away 12,000 fans to the Charlotte

(Clockwise, from left) Crisp technical skills, blind tags and savvy double-teaming are what made the Midnight Express a legendary team. Bob Holly and Bart Gunn are the younger and stronger version Cornette feels will take the name into the 21st century.

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Coliseum in North Carolina, the first wrestling sell-out there since 1978. Just to make sure they made their point, the two Express' subsequent rematches sold the Coliseum out two more times in the next month! On February 2, 1986, in the Atlanta Omni, the Midnights defeated the Rock 'N' Roll Express for the World Title, and their matches continued to draw record gates in the NWA for months. The two teams became known for having the most exciting, state-of-the-art tag team matches of the day.

The Express faced other challenges as well. The Road Warriors were a threat—as well as Dusty Rhodes and Magnum TA—but it was the Rock 'N' Roll Express who finally dethroned Cornette's boys in Philadelphia in September 1986.

Thanksgiving night 1986 marked a big loss for the Midnight Express when they were defeated by the Road Warriors in the sport's most famous scaffold match ever, in front of a live and a closed-circuit audience of almost 60,000 fans. Shortly afterward a big change came.

"Dennis Condrey dropped Bobby and I off after a match and said he'd see us at the airport the next day. We didn't see him again for two years," Cornette recalls. "He had personal problems and left us and his family. We needed a new member and we made a good choice."

The newest member of the Midnight Express was "Sweet" Stan Lane, who had been half of the Fabulous Ones, the sport's first MTV–style tag team. Eaton and Lane blended perfectly, and in their first week as a team they went to the finals of the 24-team Crockett Cup tournament. One month later, Eaton and Lane won the NWA United States Tag Team Title, which they held for an incredible one year uninterrupted, battling teams like the Fantastics, the Garvins, Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff and more, as well as continuing the rivalry with the Rock 'N' Roll Express.

Photo Credit: Bill Apter/PWI

In November 1988, Crockett Promotions was purchased by Turner Broadcasting. From the start, TBS management didn't get along with the Express in general and Cornette in particular. Cornette harbored a special dislike of Jim Herd, the man TBS hired to run WCW, as it was now called. Despite still being the company's best tag team in the ring and noted for "tearing the house down" every night, the Express couldn't get a break from the new management. In October 1990, Lane and Cornette walked out.

"Bobby stayed," Cornette recalled, "Because he had a six-figure contract and a bunch of kids to support, and Stan and I understood. There were no ill feelings, but we had to go. And that was the end of an era."

Many felt the Midnight Express, like so many other legendary tag teams, would fade off into the annals of history. Almost everyone, except for one man that is—Jim Cornette—who breathed life into the concept 14 years ago. The cagey strategist that he is, Cornette has put together a new version of the Midnight Express that is younger, faster and stronger. Bart Gunn and Bob Holly are the men Cornette has chosen to propel his creation into the 21st century.

"Two men combined as one, subverting their egos for the common good, pooling their talents for a common goal—that's the Midnight Express style," Cornette said. "Intricate teamwork and impossibly complex moves. Gunn and Holly are the men to carry that style to a new level. It's not a question of how far they'll go, but how fast?"

In wrestling, the Midnight Express are like Coca Cola or General Motors. Gunn and Holly have big shoes to fill, but if Cornette is convinced they can do it well, he should know better than anyone. The Midnight Express rolls on! ■

Now the veteran leader of the new team of Bob and Bart (left), Jim Cornette has had the ability to make Tag Team Champions ever since he was the fresh-faced leader of Dennis Condrey and Bobby Eaton (above).

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by **Kevin Kelly**

BRADSHAW AND WINDHAM: Bringing Out the Best in Each Other

*The opportunity presented itself and the **"teacher"** took it.*

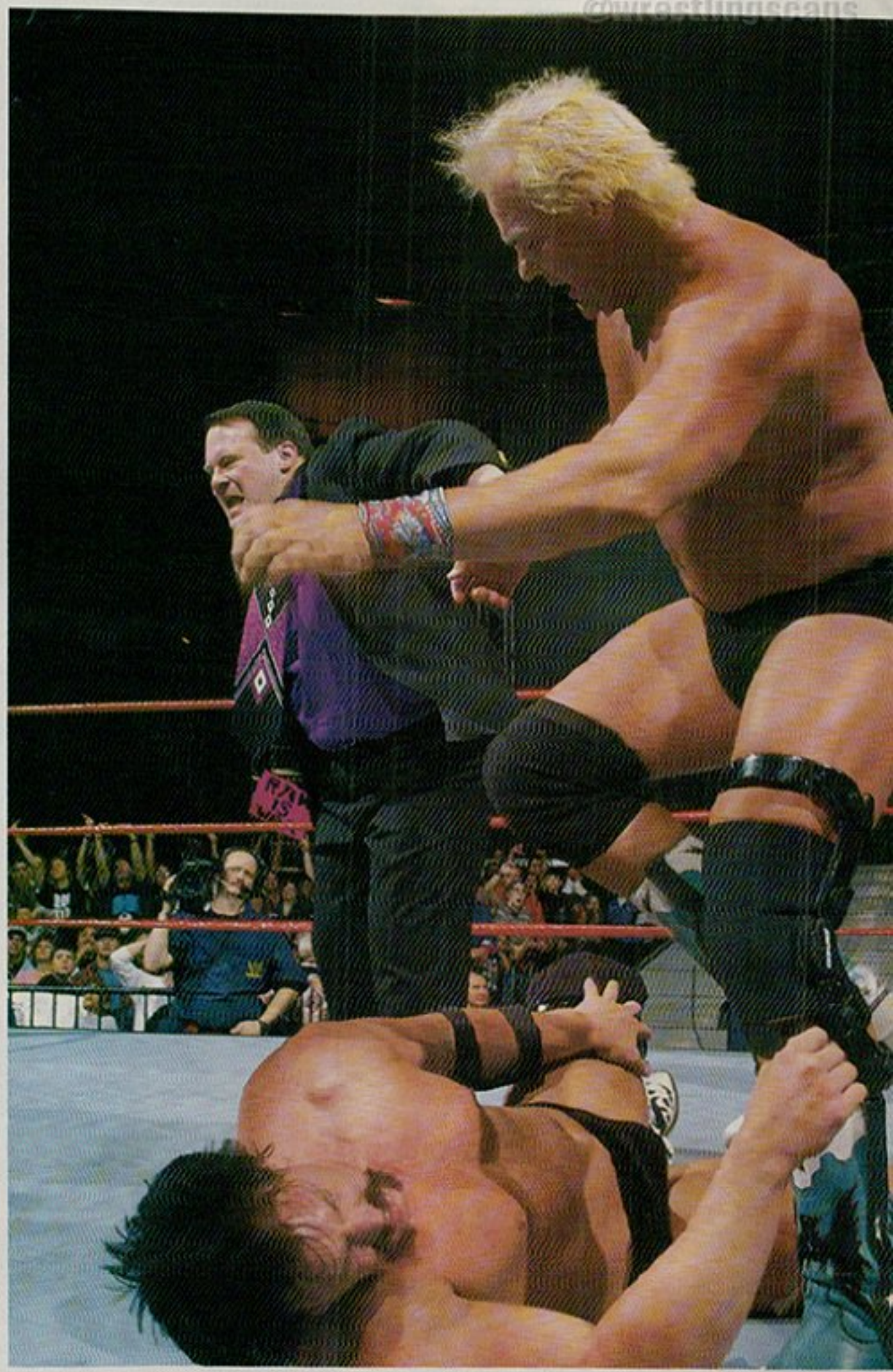
The night Barry Windham decapitated Bradshaw and returned to his NWA roots, two sleeping giants were awakened.

In 1997 two lost souls in the Federation, Bradshaw and Windham, joined together under the legendary name of the Blackjacks. The bond was instantaneous and strong, but no one seemed to care. The crowd remembered Windham from 1987 and wondered why these two kick-ass Texans looked so "gimmicky", with matching black hair and mustaches.

Fans who criticized the conditioning of Barry didn't realize that he was recovering from complete reconstructive surgery on his knee. Almost one year off his leg cost him valuable gym time, but partnered with Bradshaw the old form of B.W. began to return. Slowly but surely the conditioning improved and the two men jelled as friends and partners.

Bradshaw was just a Stan Hansen clone, his critics said. The former football All-American at Abilene Christian was a hitting machine on the gridiron and that mentality carried over to the ring. Having broken into the sport in Dallas, this Texas legend had to go to Europe and Japan to hone his craft. The rough style found overseas meshed nicely with his ability to both give and receive punishment. Experts thought that a little refinement was the final piece of the puzzle Bradshaw needed to become a champion.

Teaming Windham with Bradshaw allowed Federation officials to evaluate both men's status. They figured Barry would teach the youngster the finer points of the game while Bradshaw could carry the physical load, giving the "teacher" a chance to fully rehab his knee. Barry got back into shape, but Bradshaw seemed to soften, in some people's eyes. The veteran may have refined his wild-eyed partner, but



(Previous page) When Bradshaw and Windham joined forces, they jelled immediately as a team. (Above, clockwise) When Windham turned his back on his former partner, the entire NWA assisted in trying to put Bradshaw down for good—which has only made the big Texan stronger.

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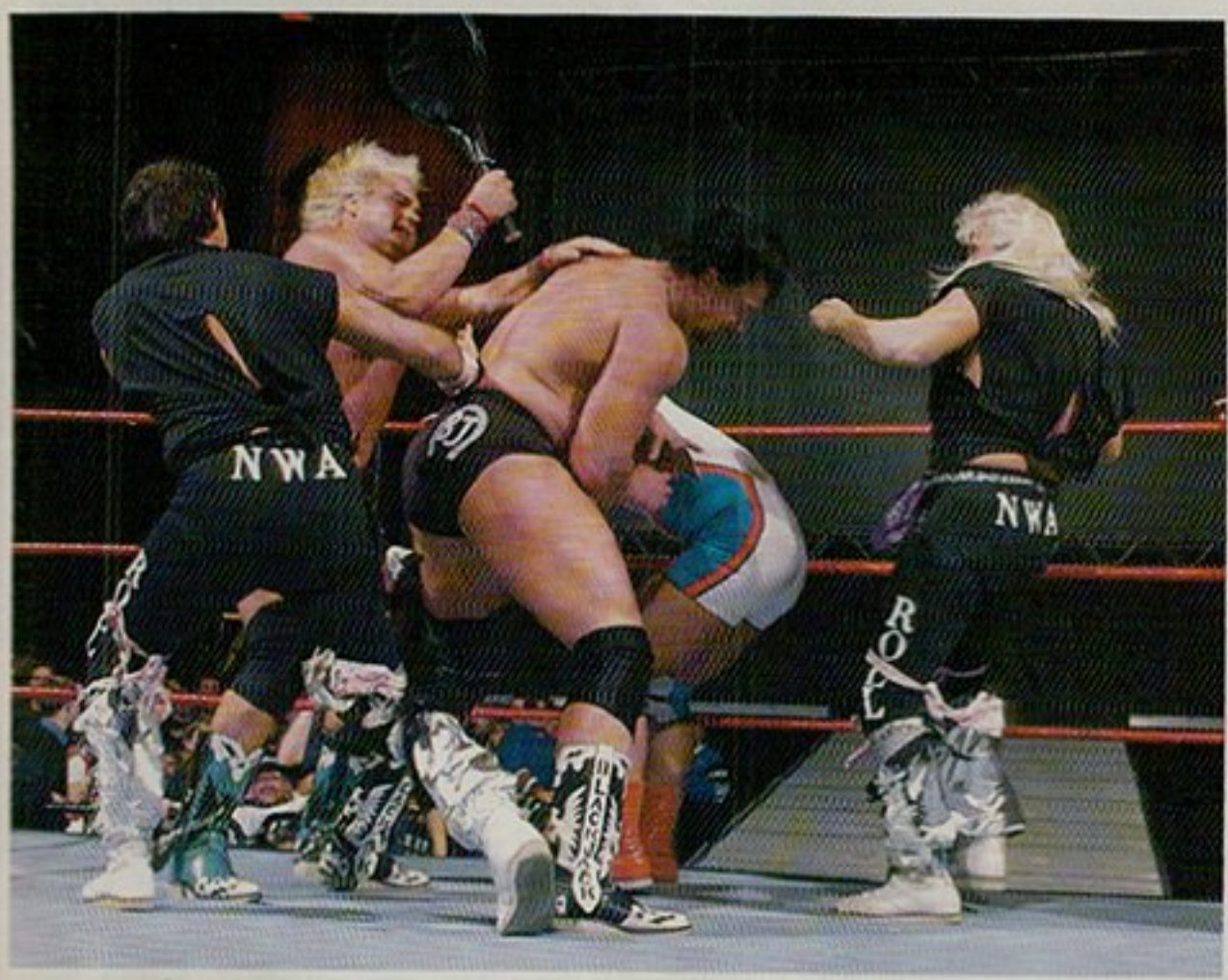

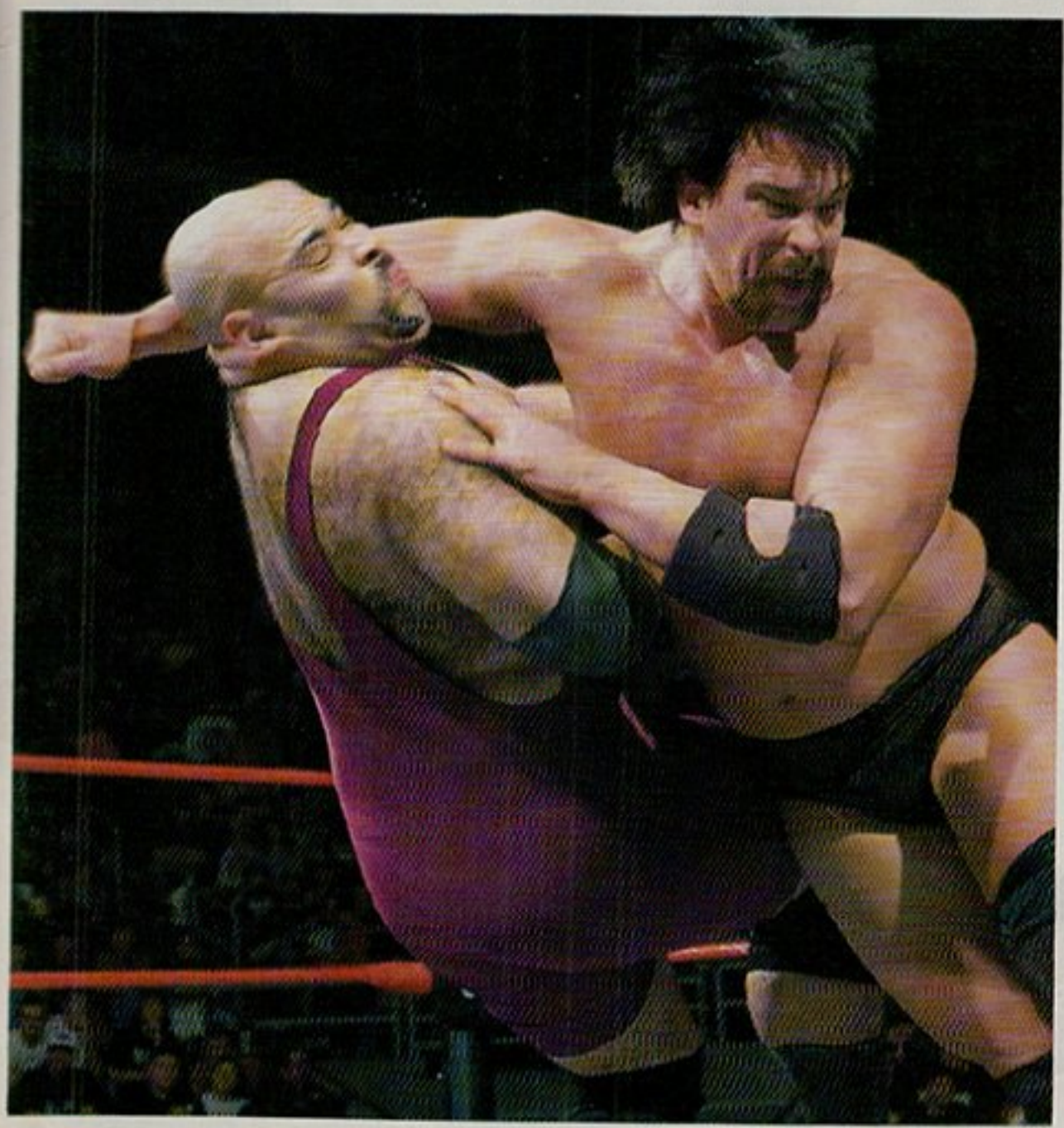

rumors also circulated that both wound up in the doghouse for some rather rambunctious behavior on the road. The team improved, but the luster of an early featured role had worn off. The Blackjacks were now struggling for recognition with the fans apathetic and the front office wondering what to do with the Texas duo.

On December 30, 1997, the awakening began. Windham faced Jeff Jarrett for the NWA North American title and lost due to the interference of Jim Cornette. Instead of being disappointed, Barry was happy as his knee felt fully healed for the first time in many years. Battling for an NWA belt seemed to also rekindle feelings of his past glory and the next week he turned on his former partner in the name of "tradition". Now alone for the first time in his Federation career, Bradshaw immediately snapped back to reality. It was time to return to his roots... his "tradition". It was time to fight.

Those who felt that Bradshaw needed refinement never consulted the Roscoe, Texas native. If they had, time would not have been wasted in the Blackjacks. Partial to a fight over a wrestling match any day, Bradshaw feels that his strength has always been in his ability to make his adversaries adapt to his rugged style, something that he says is practically impossible to do.

"One thing that makes Shawn Michaels great is the fact that he can adapt his style to whoever he is facing. If he wrestles Owen Hart, it is a high-flying match. If he takes on Mankind, he goes hardcore. There is no one else in the World Wrestling Federation that can do that, so I'm not going to change my style. I make my opponents change."

Now that Windham and Bradshaw have split, they are more true to their origins than they were as teammates. Barry is the fluid technician, Bradshaw the aggressive animal. Their battles will be remembered for their passion, not their beauty. Both returned to the place they felt comfortable and will be at their best now that they are home. ■

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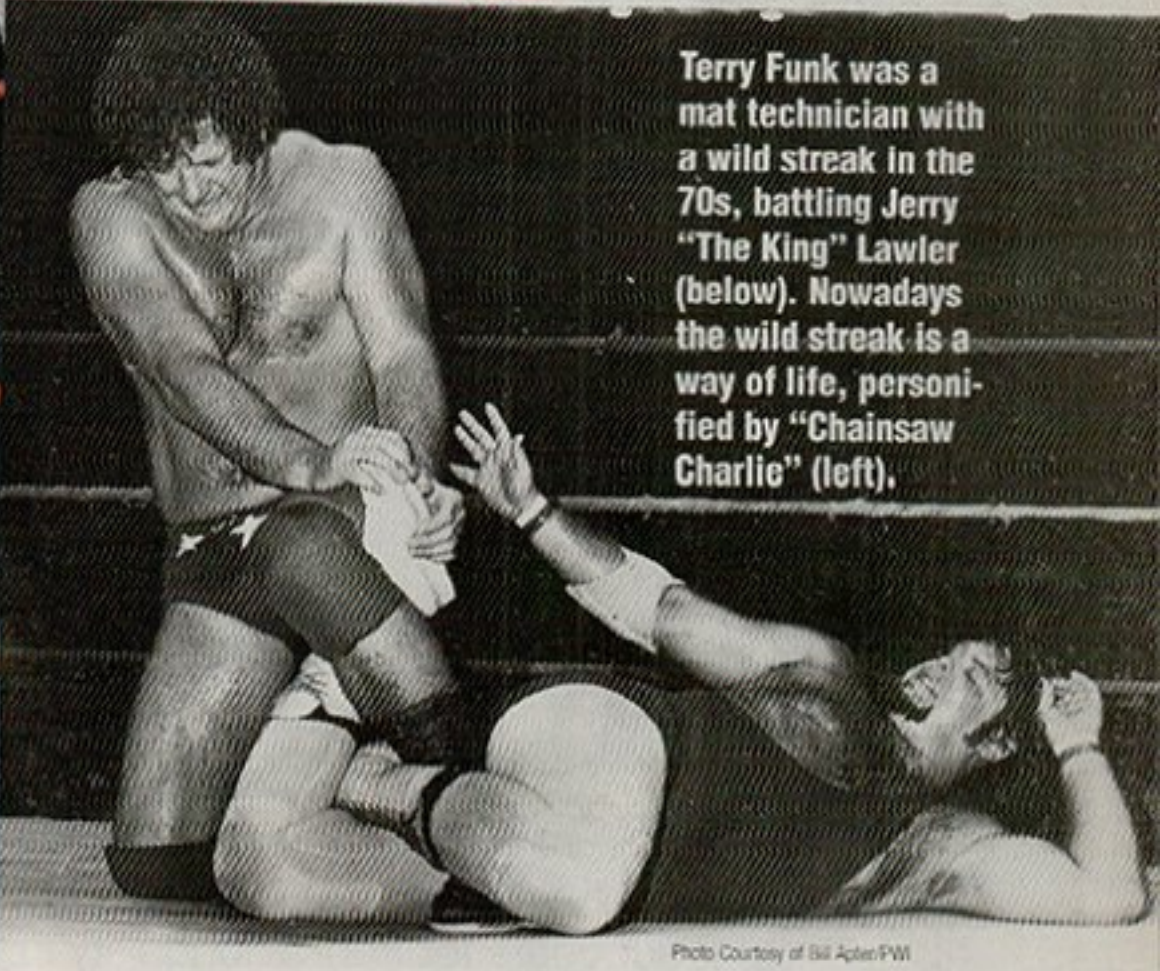

Terry Funk was a mat technician with a wild streak in the 70s, battling Jerry "The King" Lawler (below). Nowadays the wild streak is a way of life, personified by "Chainsaw Charlie" (left).

Photo Courtesy of Bill Apter/PWI

A life of accolades, **death matches** and... now... chainsaws.

The incident occurred so long ago... in a career that spanned four decades... that Terry Funk isn't sure whether it took place in the 1970s or 80s. The former NWA champion remembers the town—Corpus Christi, Texas—and one other detail. As Terry was focusing on his opponent, a man in the crowd plunged a knife into him.

The injuries were superficial. Funk had made a career out of sacrificing his body for the business—brawling with chairs, crashing through tables, flying over the top rope chin-first into the guardrail. Now, furious about the way the sneering superstar mocked the crowd, a fan had tried to take the wrestler's life. In the locker room, a police officer asked Terry if he planned to press charges. With blood drying on his chest hair, Terry looked at the lawman as if he had suggested swimming across the Gulf of Mexico to Florida.

"Why should I file on him?" Funk asked. "This is a person who believes in Terry Funk more than anyone... more

BY KEITH ELLIOT GREENBERG

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It is this attitude—an obsession with **pushing himself** way past the limit and a heartfelt respect for the spectators who egg him on—that accounts for Funk's longevity in the sport of kings.

than I do. I think he was paying me a compliment."

It is this attitude—an obsession with pushing himself way past the limit and a heartfelt respect for the spectators who egg him on—that accounts for Funk's longevity in the sport of kings. He's wrestled in Japanese rings surrounded by bombs and barbed wire, had a promotion—Extreme Championship Wrestling (ECW)—patterned after his chaotic style, and he retired several times—most recently last September, after a loss to then–World Wrestling Federation Champion Bret Hart in Funk's hometown of Amarillo, Texas. But at 53 years of age, after having purchased property and sending his children to college, Funk can't just stay home and reminisce about the good old days. So, he's still living them, rampaging from Syracuse, New York, to San Diego, California, wearing a stocking over his head and lashing out at adversaries with a chainsaw.

"Why not?" the man dubbed "Chainsaw Charlie" asks in his throaty voice, during a late-night phone conversation from his Double Cross Ranch to my Brooklyn, New York, apartment. "It's $8 for a Wal Mart shirt, $15 for

(Above) Life as a hardcore legend has its ups and downs, dramatized as Funk takes an unexpected trip to the hospital courtesy of the New Age Outlaws. (Right) The Artist Formerly Known as Goldust knows as do other Federation superstars that Funk hits hard and likes to be hit hard in return.

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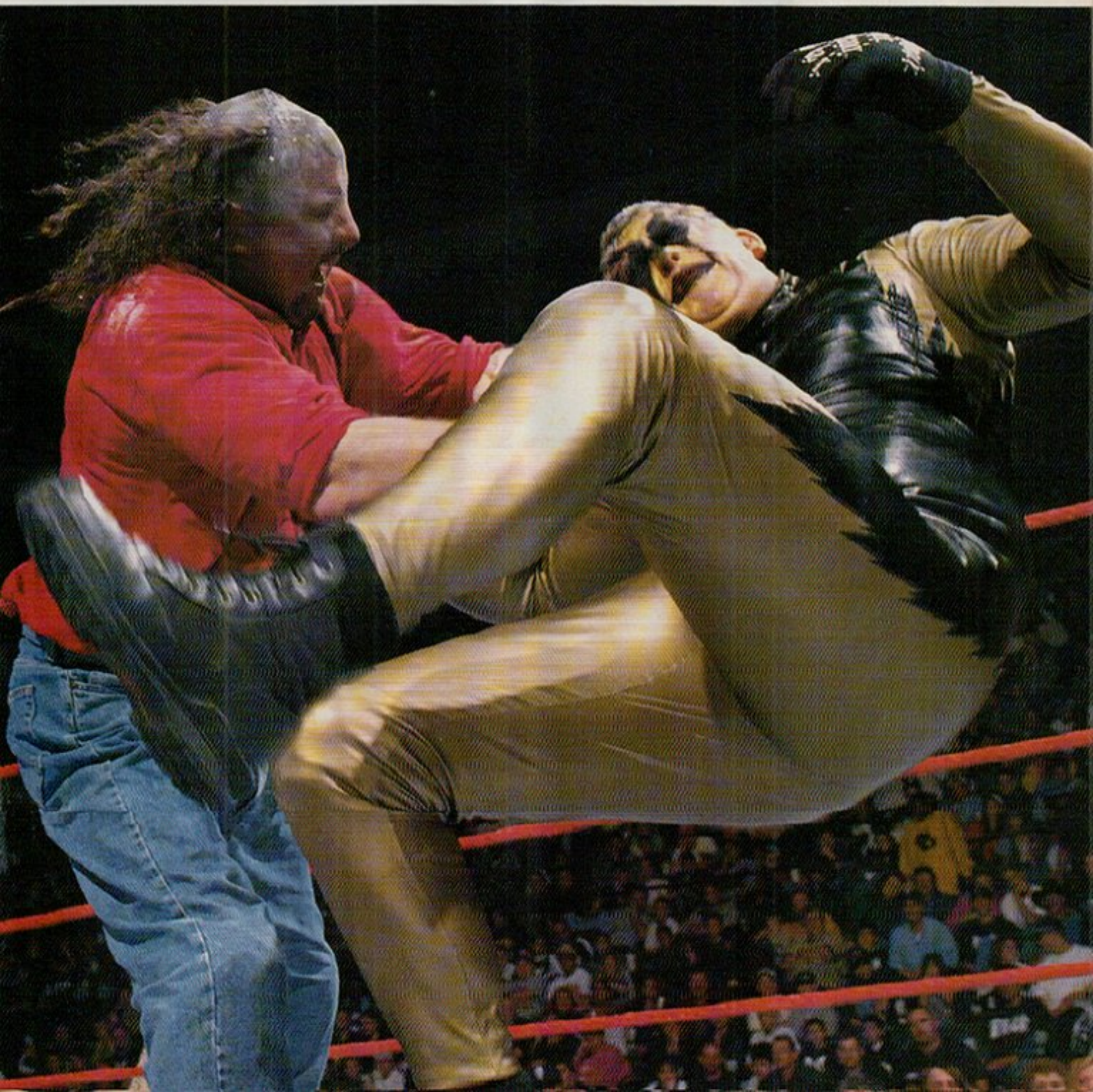
a pair of Levis, $5 for a pair of suspenders, and the pantyhose I wear over my face costs a buck. Not a bad investment."

Terry has been on this road since the 1950s when he sold concessions with the late Dick Murdoch, while both their fathers battled in dusty arenas around the Lone Star State. By 1965, Funk was ready for his debut in Amarillo, Texas. With his father Dory Funk, Sr. watching from the aisle, the rookie locked up with Sputnik Monroe, took a few lumps, but rebounded enough to have his foe tied up for the pin when the bell rang, signaling a time limit draw.

"Honestly, I was scared to death about what my Dad would do to me if I lost," Terry laughs. "That's why I fought so hard. I wasn't afraid of old Sputnik."

In 1972, Terry and his brother, Dory Jr., took their first trip to Japan, where both would hold numerous titles and attain a status rivaling national icons Shohei "Giant" Baba and Antonio Inoki.

"The wrestling culture was so different from Texas at that time,"



Funk says. "I think the audience was about 85 percent adult males in suits and ties. They never booed—that would be impolite. They never screamed. When they saw something they liked, they'd quietly applaud."

A generation after the United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Americans were generally disliked in the Land of the Rising Sun and promoters tended to book the foreign "villains" against Japanese "good guys." Funk wasn't happy with the arrangement: he wanted to fight everyone. When he was finished tussling with the Japanese, he battled Americans in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kawasaki, taunting fans with the same bluster he displayed at home and provoking them to break with tradition in order to boo—and eventually—to cheer him.

In December 1975, after a thrilling, 60-minute clash with Jack Brisco, Funk captured the NWA championship in Miami, Florida. The NWA title was then defended in 26 regional territories in North America. But Funk yearned to unify the belt in a contest against World Wrestling Federation Champion Bruno Sammartino. The frosty politics between the two promotions prevented that match from occurring.

Around the time of the first *WrestleMania* in 1985, Funk decided to jump to the World Wrestling Federation.

"I saw a change in professional wrestling," he says. "The World Wrestling Federation was being seen everywhere on cable television and I wanted to be a part of it. I'd always wondered what it would be like for a guy like me—a guy associated with the NWA—to take a chance in the World Wrestling Federation." Funk feuded with the Junkyard Dog and challenged then-champion Hulk Hogan on the NBC television network. "It was a great experience," he says. "But if you ask me if Hogan is the messiah of professional wrestling, I'd say no."

Funk was calling himself "middle-aged and crazy" and his reputation was still growing. In 1991, he collided with Atsushi Onita in Japan in what may have been the most treacherous match in history.

"There were explosives rigged up all around the ring, and whenever we Irish whipped each other, we got burned pretty bad," he recounts. "I was cut up, too, from the barbed wire tied around the ropes. It was an extremely dangerous match, but it didn't make me scared of doing it again. In fact, in 1994, I went to Japan another time and had a similar type of match against Cactus Jack."

Jack—also known by his alter egos Mankind and Dude Love—won the battle and the right to call himself the "King of the Death Match." Funk tried reclaiming the honor by fighting Jack again on the other side of the Pacific in ECW. When Cactus ventured into the World Wrestling Federation and found himself assailed by the New Age Outlaws, Badd Ass Billy Gunn and the Road Dog, Funk—a former ECW

(Above) Few young fans know that Terry Funk was the NWA World Heavyweight Champion from 1975 to 1977. (Right) Most older fans don't know that Chainsaw Charlie was a tribute to a friend of Funk's, and not a hair-brained marketing scheme.

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champ—decided to pick up his chainsaw and jump into the fray.

The name Chainsaw Charlie is a memorial to Terry's friend, John Ayers, the former San Francisco 49er who died of liver cancer.

"There used to be this barber in Canyon, Texas, and John would take his kid, J.T., in there," says Funk. "The barber would chop up the kid's hair pretty bad, and I started calling him Chainsaw Charlie. When I came to the World Wrestling Federation, I thought the name would be a tribute to my friend."

Regardless of his ring moniker, Funk says it has been an honor to both team with—and brawl against—Cactus Jack. "I've known Cactus since the late 1980s, when I met him at an independent show in New York. The guy's absolutely nuts. But he's one of the great success stories of this business. He's given part of his life, part of his body for what he loves. We both have the same motto—it doesn't matter if there's 10 people out there or 10,000... you give them their money's worth."

No one denies that Funk lives this philosophy. In February—after he and Cactus were hurled off a platform in a dumpster, for example—Chainsaw Charlie recovered fast, slicing his way through the bottom of a ring days later to run off the perpetrators, the New Age Outlaws.

Funk enjoys the sheer adrenalin rush of these confrontations, but admits there's something else he covets. "I've always wanted a World Wrestling Federation belt," he says. "I mean, any belt—Tag Team, Intercontinental, European Championship. It's something I've never done. And before my career is over, I hope it's something I accomplish."

According to the man who may be the most excessive titan in the history of the mat wars, when that day comes the name "Terry Funk" will not be listed in the record books. "I already told you, Terry Funk's retired," he chuckles from the other end of the phone. "Chainsaw Charlie lives!" ■

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BY BILL BANKS

Yo, do you Remember...

The Managing Elite?

Throughout the rich history of the World Wrestling Federation, scores of managers have graced the ringside in an effort to mold their proteges into tactical machines. If not for someone overseeing their careers, some of the most recognized grapplers in the sport might have fallen by the wayside. Old-timers still speak of the genius displayed by Bobby Davis in the 1960s and names such as Paul Ellering, Mr. Fuji, Bobby Heenan, Jim Cornette, Jimmy Hart, Sunny and Slick all led their respective superstars to greatness in the 80s.

And then there are the "elite"... The Grand Wizard, Skaaland, Blassie and Albano. They were loud, flamboyant, quick-witted and brilliant. And, above all, they were the best.

The Grand Wizard:

The late Ernie Roth, the fashionably loud "Grand Wizard" of the Federation managerial ranks during the 70s and early 80s, was a little man with a big mouth who loved to taunt opponents. In addition to an array of eccentric turbans and glasses, his wild attire consisted of multi-colored suits—replete with military medals! In 1973 the Wizard led the late Stan "The Man" Stasiak to an upset Federation Title win over Pedro Morales in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Then in 1977 the manager guided Superstar Billy Graham to the gold with a victory over Bruno Sammartino in Baltimore, Maryland. While managing

(Left) The late Grand Wizard loved to back up his mouth with eccentric clothing, consisting of multi-colored striped suits, outlandish glasses and turbans. Arnold Skaaland (above), on the other hand, was more conservative in his style while leading Bob Backlund and Bruno Sammartino during their respective World Wrestling Federation Title reigns.

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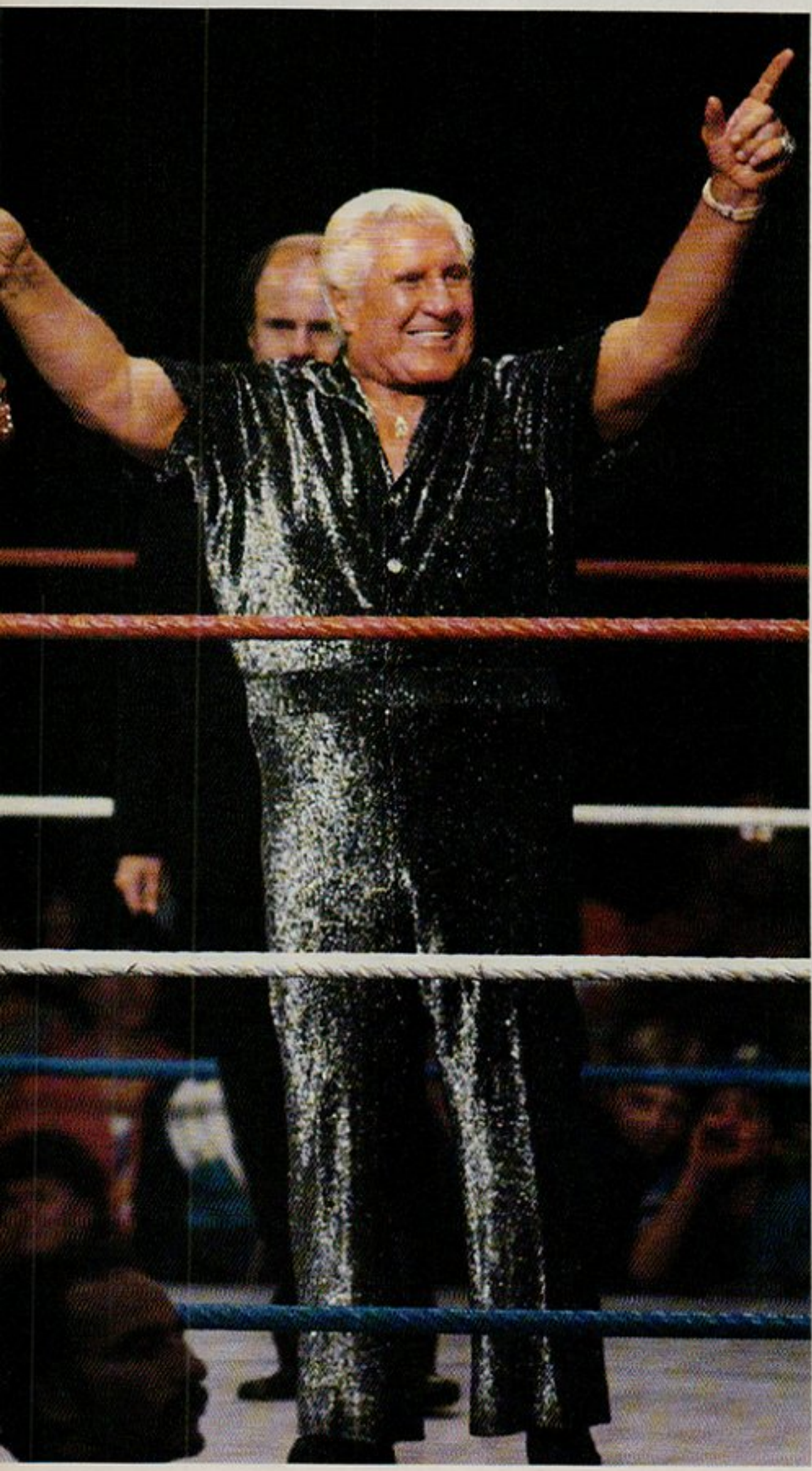

Graham, he introduced another superstar to the World Wrestling Federation ranks—Sgt. Slaughter. It was the Wizard who instructed the former Marine in one of the most memorable and bloodiest matches in wrestling history—the 1981 Madison Square Garden "Alley Fight" against Pat Patterson. Then, in 1983, the wrestling world mourned the death of the Wizard at age 54 as a result of a heart attack in his Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, home. When the legendary manager was inducted into the World Wrestling Federation Hall of Fame in 1995 in attendance were some of his former enemies who honored his legacy with a standing ovation.

"The Golden Boy" Arnold Skaaland:

"The Golden Boy" Arnold Skaaland, who is still involved in the Federation behind the scenes as an official, has been a part of the sport for more than 50 years! A decorated World War II Marine, Skaaland was one of the toughest men in his era. His name was—and still is in some circles—synonymous with ruggedness and character. He was one of the first men to manage the late Andre the Giant when the Eighth Wonder of the World joined the Federation in the 1970s. Skaaland, himself a champion of countless regional wrestling outfits, also managed Bruno Sammartino to the Federation Title in 1973 and Bob Backlund to the championship in 1978. He enjoys his cigars, loves reminiscing about his golden years, and he is quick-witted—always one to deliver a joke that doubles you

(Left) During his managing heyday, "Classy" Freddie Blassie led the Iron Sheik to both Federation and Tag Team Title wins. He is also known for labeling fans and fellow superstars "pencil-necked geeks". (Right) The legendary "Maker of Champions", Captain Lou Albano, is credited with introducing the era of Rock 'n' Wrestling with singer Cyndi Lauper.

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over with laughter. Along with being the World Wrestling Federation resident gin rummy and cribbage champ, Arnie also enjoys the moments he spends with his family—especially his wife, Betty, their children and grandchildren. In 1994, Skaaland was among the first to be inducted into the Hall of Fame by Shane McMahon.

"Classy" Freddie Blassie:

Prior to entering the World Wrestling Federation, the "Hollywood Fashion Plate" was an accomplished singles competitor in various independent promotions. His first big managerial offer came in 1976, when legendary boxer Muhammad Ali recruited Blassie to coach him in his Tokyo, Japan, boxer versus wrestler fight with Antonio Inoki. In 1983, Freddie managed the Iron Sheik to a Federation Title win over Bob Backlund in New York City's Madison Square Garden. After the Iranian dropped the belt to Hulk Hogan one month later, Blassie paired the Sheik with Russian grappler Nikolai Volkoff as a tag team combination. Before each contest, the pair demanded that fans stand at attention for the singing of their respective national anthems. At *WrestleMania* in New York City in 1985, Blassie led his duo to the tag team gold in a win over Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo. Besides managing the Sheik and Volkoff to the title, the wrestling world will undoubtedly remember "Classy" for labeling fans and fellow superstars "Pencil-Necked Geeks". In 1994 the legendary manager was inducted into the Federation Hall of Fame by talk show celebrity Regis Philbin. Although he recently celebrated his eightieth birthday and is happily retired, Blassie still spends many hours entertaining the underprivileged as a Federation Goodwill Ambassador.

Captain Lou Albano:

Lou Albano, the legendary "Maker of Champions" and arguably the greatest manager in the sport, has guided more than a dozen combinations to the

Federation Tag Team Title during his career. Prior to entering the advising ranks, Lou regularly competed as a grappler, and captured the World Wide Wrestling Federation U.S. Tag Team Title as a member of the "Sicilians" in 1967. His first managerial accomplishment came in 1971, when he led Russian great Ivan Koloff to a Federation Title win over Bruno Sammartino. The tag team ranks of the 1970s and 80s is where this wrestling genius became a household name. In 1972 he managed the first Federation Tag Team Champions, Crazy Luke Graham and Tarzan Tyler, and subsequently led Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji, the Valiants, Blackjacks, Moondogs, Samoans, Executioners, British Bulldogs and others to the gold. In 1981, the rubber-band-wearing manager also brought Don "The Rock" Muraco to Intercontinental gold over Pedro Morales. In the mid-80s, Albano was credited with helping to lead the Federation into the era of Rock 'n' Wrestling along with singer Cyndi Lauper. Outside the squared circle, the Captain appeared in Lauper's video *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*. Prior to being inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1996, he returned to the ranks and guided his 14th team—the Headshrinkers—to the championship! ■

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THE NIGHT THE BELT CHANGED HANDS

The Steiner Brothers vs. The Quebecers

BY LUCAS SWINEFORD

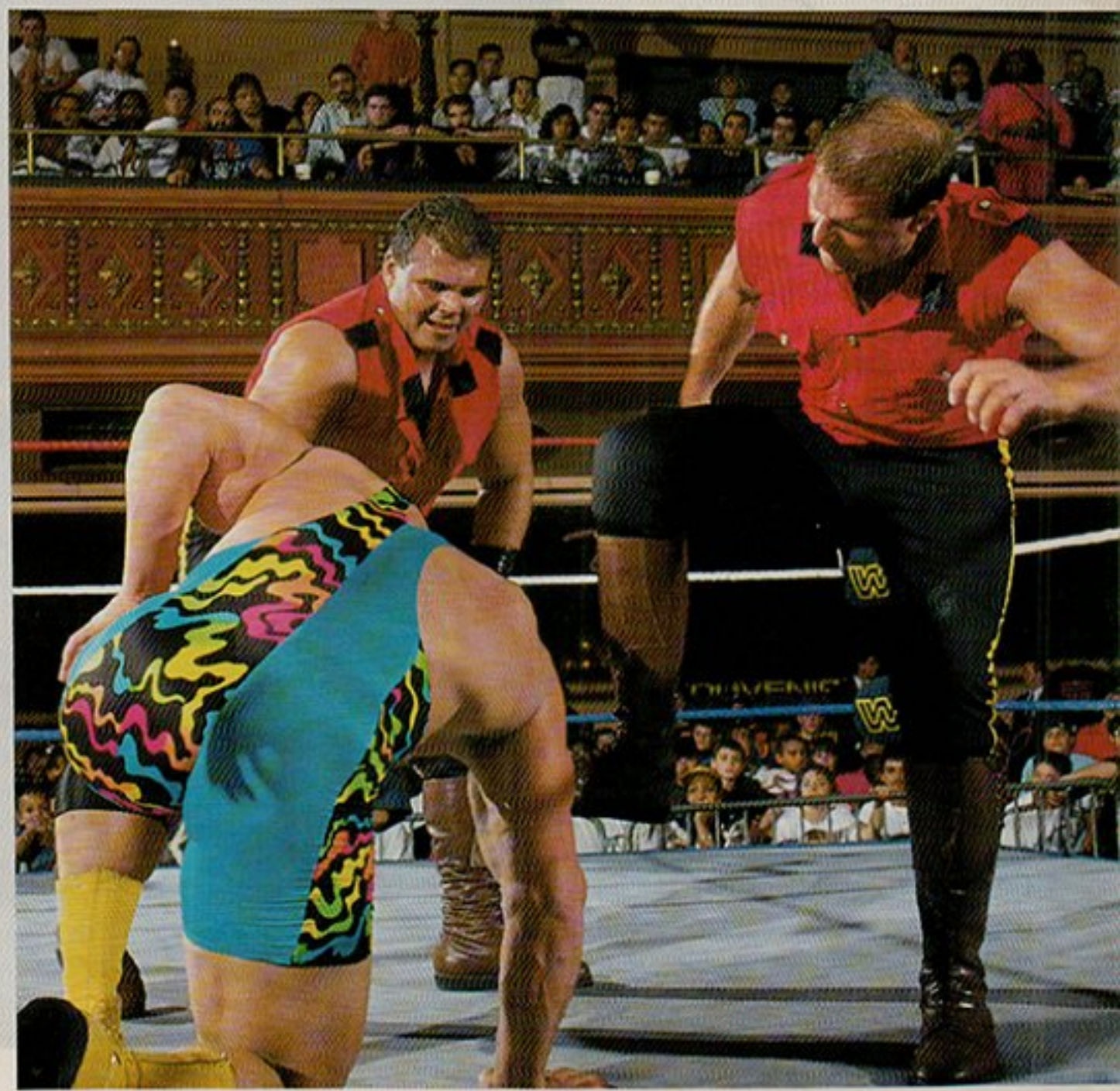
September 13, 1993
New York, New York

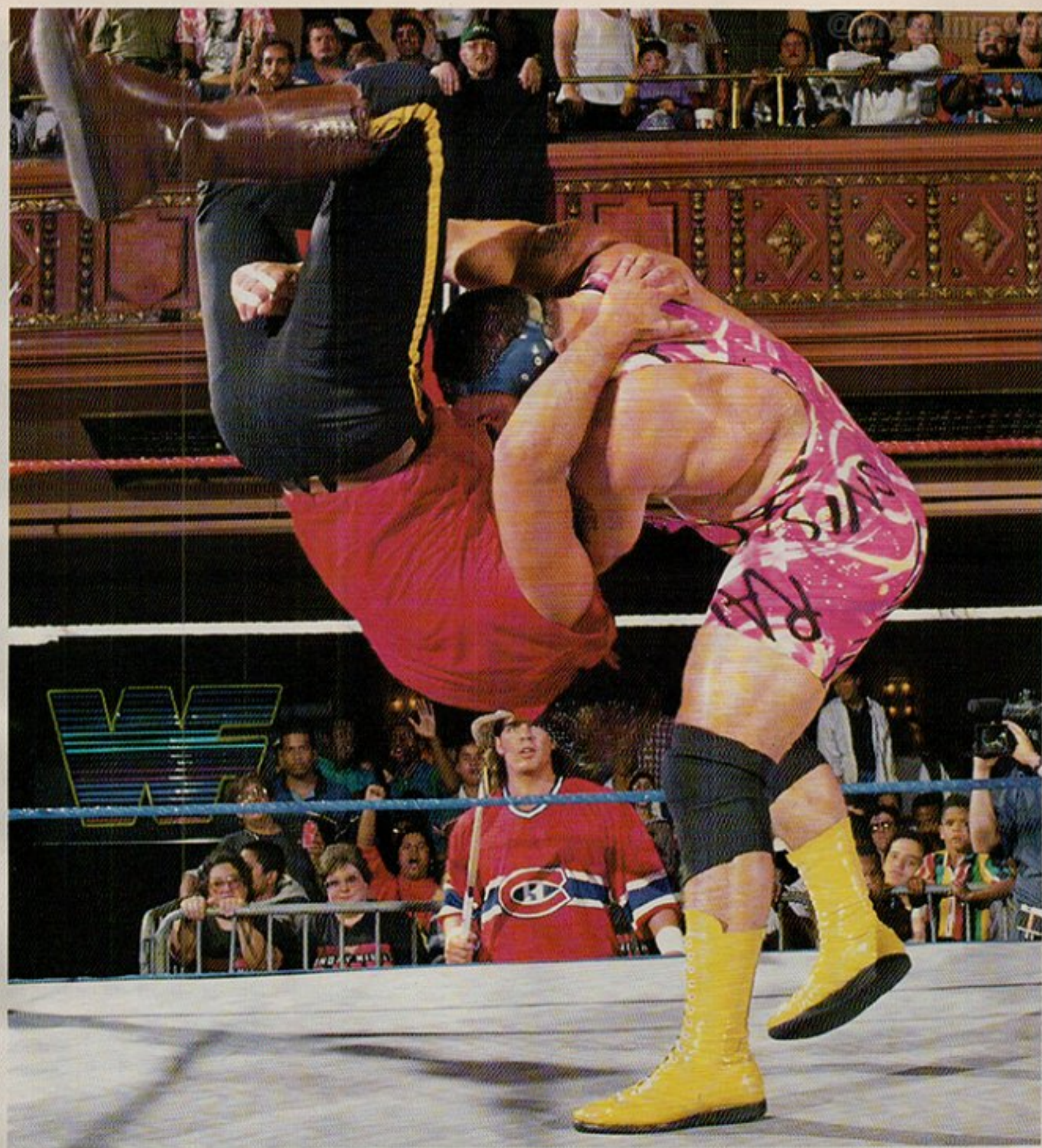
"Confronted with the difficult task of defeating the Steiner Brothers for the World Wrestling Federation Tag Team Titles, the Quebecers knew they needed to find an advantage over the experienced brothers from Michigan. Somehow Jacques and Pierre were able to convince their opponents that this match should be governed under "Quebec Province Rules". Clearly favoring the native Canadians who had wrestled under the hometown stipulations before the special rules were as follows: 1) titles can be lost by disqualification, 2) titles can be lost by count-out, 3) piledrivers are illegal, 4) jumping off the top rope is illegal, 5) throwing an opponent over the top rope is illegal. Any team failing to comply with the special stipulations would be subject to immediate disqualification, which in the Steiners' case meant the titles would change hands.

Using his clear strength advantage, Rick Steiner forced Jacques to make a quick tag after dropping him to the canvas with a devastating powerslam. Using an arsenal of dropkicks and powerbombs, Scott Steiner—who was now the legal man in the ring—eyed a quick victory, but Pierre was able to slow down the momentum by catching the former All-American with a boot to the face. Looking to put his weakened opponent away, Rick went to deliver a crushing piledriver. Fortunately for the duo from Detroit, Scott was able to remind his older brother that their championship status would be jeopardized if he continued with the move.

Once again, Scott minded the rules for the sibling pair when he advised his stocky brother to originate an elbow drop from the middle rope rather than up top. Slamming Pierre down to the mat with a vicious suplex, Scott clearly had the momentum in the corner of the former Wolverines—until the Quebecers' manager appeared ringside. Prior to the match, our two northern neighbors were not under the guidance of anyone; however, Johnny Polo walked out of the locker room in support of the foreign duo.

Seeing that his new team was in danger of being defeated, Polo called Jacques and Pierre out of the ring for a brief strategy meeting. Taking advantage of their excellent teamwork, the Quebecers punished Scott once they were back in the action. Whether it was with double-arm clotheslines, successions of elbow drops or splashing Steiner after hoisting each other in the air, the Canadians realized that they





could become the new champions. The drubbing of Scott continued as he was lifted high in the air by his two opponents and then dropped across the top rope. In addition to momentarily losing his breath, Steiner was now unable to move because his hand was tangled in the ropes. Looking out for his partner, Rick attempted to enter the ring to free him, but the referee stopped him. With the official's back turned, Pierre further hampered Scott's ability to breath by choking him out with a rope from the turnbuckle. Having been pulverized for what seemed like an eternity, Scott Steiner was apparently ready to succumb to Jacques' "Boston Crab." Before the Quebecers could earn the

(Left) In order to beat the Steiners for the Federation Tag Team Title, Jacques and Pierre fought the brothers under special "Quebec Province Rules". (Above) Because jumping off the top rope was illegal in this match, Rick Steiner was forced to defend the gold strictly with a ground-based attack.

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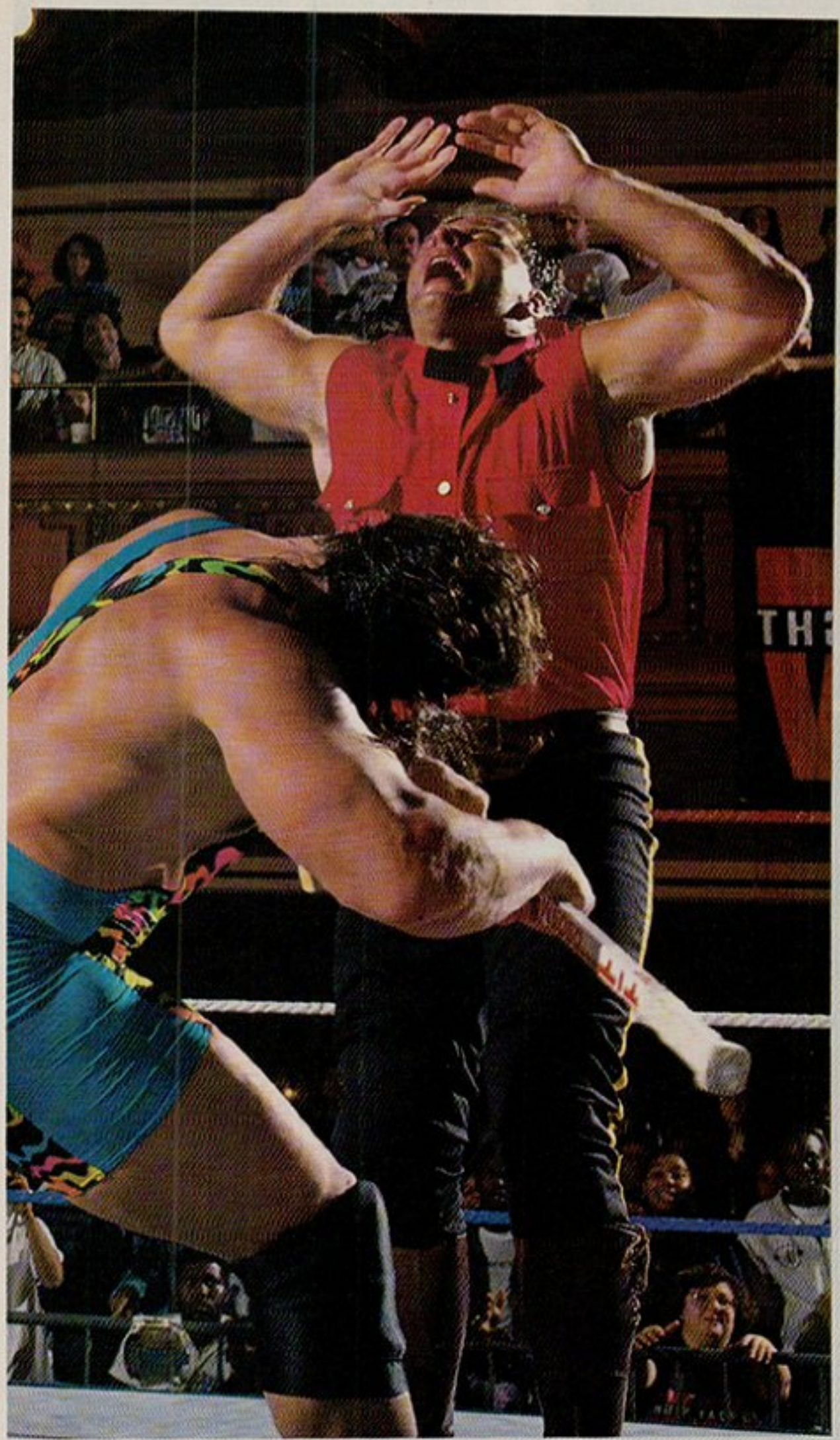

(Above) During a four-man melee in the ring, Johnny Polo climbed to the apron with his hockey stick, only to be struck down by Rick. The weapon found its way into Scott's hands and the referee disqualified him for using it on Jacques. (Right) Under the rules of the bout, the decision meant disaster for the Steiners and the Quebecers were the new titleholders.

victory by submission, the official forced Jacques to release the hold, claiming he was not the legal man in the ring. The quick confrontation presented Rick the opportunity to get involved.

Having watched his brother being savagely beaten for too long, Rick rushed the ring to chase the Quebecers out for a moment. Immediately after the challengers returned, Scott was able to muster enough strength to send them crashing to the canvas courtesy of a double clothesline. With his energy apparently restored, the younger member of the championship duo seemed to have the pinfall victory in hand after taking down Pierre with the "FrankenSteiner". Jacques was able to break up the three-count before it became official, a move which triggered mayhem in the ring.

With all four superstars in the squared circle, Johnny Polo watched the action from the ring apron with hockey stick in hand. Knowing the less-than-courageous manager had some chicanery planned, Rick Steiner went to attack him before he could make a move. With one right hand to his curly-topped head, Polo was sent crashing to the floor, but his hockey stick found a new home in the middle of the ring. Working to clear Rick out of the ring, the official had his back to the action. Jacques picked up the stick and swung it ferociously at Scott who was able to grab it before it struck him. Yanking it from the Canadians' hands, Steiner began beating him across the back with it. After the official returned his attention to the match, Steiner continued to use the object, forcing the champions to be disqualified.

In ordinary title defense, the belts cannot change hands due to a disqualification; however, due to the special "Quebec Province Rules" the Quebecers left the Manhattan Center with tag team gold wrapped firmly around their waists. ■

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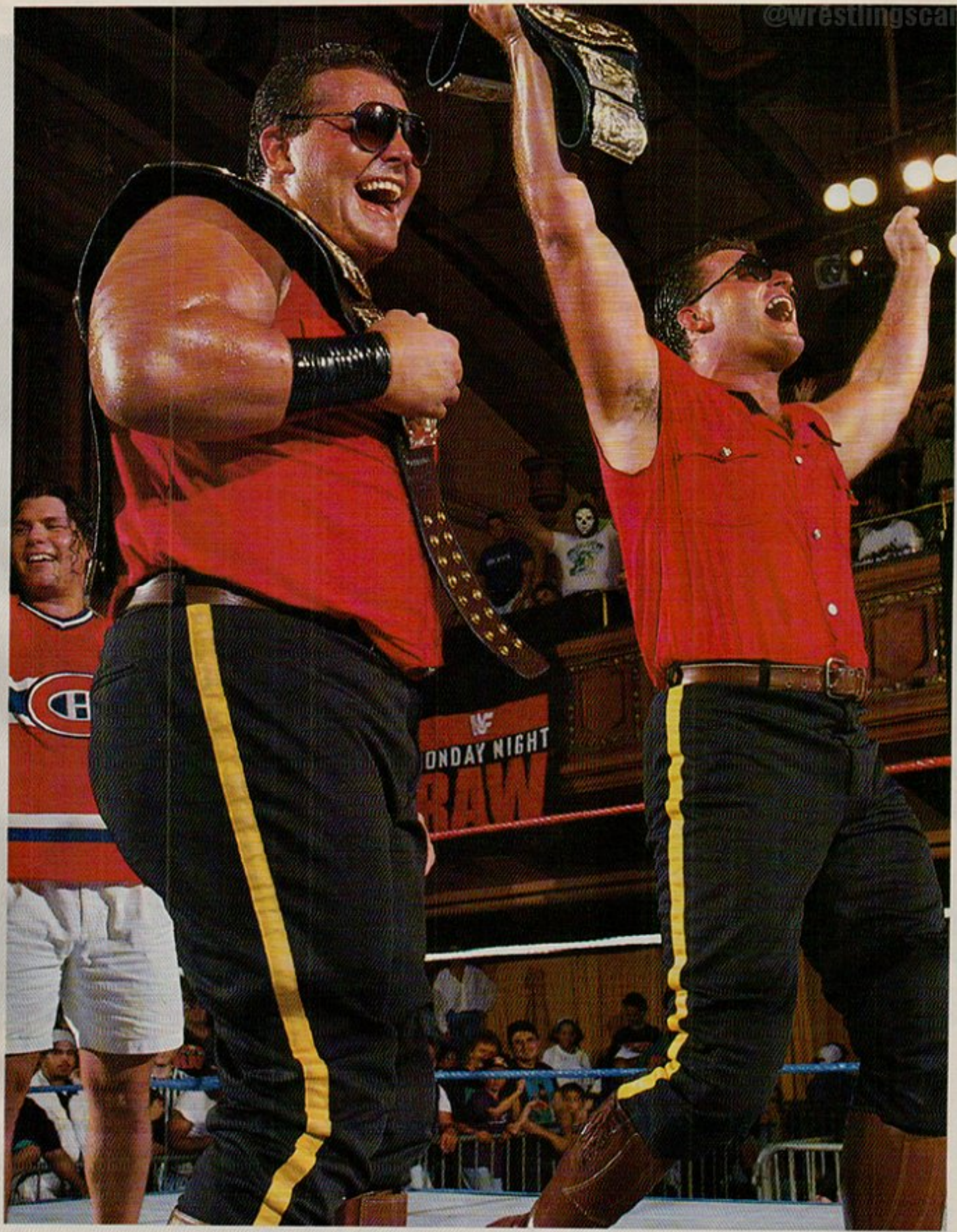

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Fantasy Warfare

"The Rock" Rocky Maivia vs. Don "The Rock" Muraco

BY BILL BANKS

Throughout his long and successful career in the World Wrestling Federation, the Hawaiian native was known by two nicknames—"Magnificent" and "The Rock". As for this former Intercontinental Champion, who looked as though he was carved out of granite, labeling him "The Rock" was perhaps the highest respect one could pay.

Now a two-time Intercontinental Champion, Rocky Maivia has introduced the nickname "The Rock" to a new generation of fans. Just like his predecessor with a Pacific Island heritage, the brash champion is a master at frustrating emotional control. It's a battle for supremacy between Intercontinental Champions in this arena of Fantasy Warfare!

Don "The Rock" Muraco:

STRENGTHS:

Some wrestling aficionados likened Don Muraco to a fine wine—as his career wound down, he seemed to add more of an edge. Near the time of his retirement shortly after *WrestleMania* IV, "The Rock" looked in the best shape of his life! Some insiders say he is still in such good health he could don the tights once more. Also, the former Intercontinental Champion always had strong managerial backup during his heyday in the 80s. Shortly after his 1980 debut, the legendary late "Grand Wizard" guided Muraco, followed by Captain Lou Albano, Mr. Fuji and briefly Superstar Billy Graham.

WEAKNESSES:

Shortly after Muraco arrived on the scene in the Federation, a change in training led to a size increase. While the added strength was an asset, more size meant less mobility—which usually put him at a disadvantage against opponents such as Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka and later Tito Santana. By the late 80s, however, the former Intercontinental Champion had rededicated himself to the weight room.

(Left) As Don Muraco's remarkable career wound down in the late 80s, many insiders noted that he was in the best shape of his life and could lace up the boots to this day. (Right) Besides adding size and strength to his repertoire, Rocky Maivia is a complete athlete who has only scratched the surface of his career.

After getting by Dino Bravo, his title hopes were shattered in the second round after losing to Ted DiBiase.

FINISHING MOVE:

Along with Paul Orndorff, Muraco was known to employ one of the most lethal piledrivers in the Federation in the 80s. The former Intercontinental Champion's differed from Orndorff's in that Muraco's was more like the Tombstone used frequently today by the Undertaker and Kane. Ironically, "Mr. Wonderful" and his nemesis would square off at *WrestleMania* 2, but neither was ever able to use the maneuver! What made Don's piledriver more damaging was the strength of his massive legs—some opponents were knocked out cold by the sheer force of their craniums driving into the canvas.

STRATEGY:

In order to get the best of a "complete package" such as Rocky Maivia, the native Hawaiian must be in peek physical form. Stepping into the squared circle with the same poundage he carried in the mid-80s would be devastating to his chances. Against the Nation member, Muraco holds two strengths—the knowledge of his legendary managers and a powerful piledriver finishing move. While Maivia's claim of being "the best damn Intercontinental Champion of all time" might very well be true, he is still far too young to out think the great minds of the late Grand Wizard or "Maker of Champions" Lou Albano. Hopefully, the rest of the Nation would be back in the locker room during the bout as well! Couple that with a chance to use the piledriver, and the original "Rock" stands to gain the upper hand!

"The Rock" Rocky Maivia:

STRENGTHS:

Like his adversary, the brash University of Miami football star's talents are many. The 90s "Rock" is perhaps a complete athlete, adding size and strength to an amazing offensive repertoire. It's frustrating to truly hate Maivia, as he can back up his attitude inside the ring with superior talent. It seems the chants of "Rocky Sucks" only serve to give him more incentive! No doubt, the second-generation star also took a great deal of advice from his father Rocky Johnson, a former

(Above) Maivia's greatest weakness is a hunger for the spotlight, which recently landed him in a bitter feud with Ken Shamrock. (Right) Muraco's piledriver was an early version of the Undertaker's Tombstone Piledriver.

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Federation Tag Team Champion himself. And, finally, with D'Lo, Kama and Mark Henry watching his back, what better advantage could there be?

WEAKNESSES:

Maivia's constant hunger for total control of the spotlight has recently landed him in trouble not only with Ken Shamrock but Faarooq as well! When the World's Most Dangerous Man grabbed bigger headlines than Rocky prior to the 1998 *Royal Rumble*, the champion felt threatened and ended the one making the challenges! Also, his lack of respect toward Faarooq, formerly known as Ron Simmons, caused a gigantic rift within the once cohesive Nation. While Brown, Mustafa and Henry indeed "knew their roles", constantly barking the same order at the first World's Black Heavyweight champion wasn't a wise move!

KEY WINS:

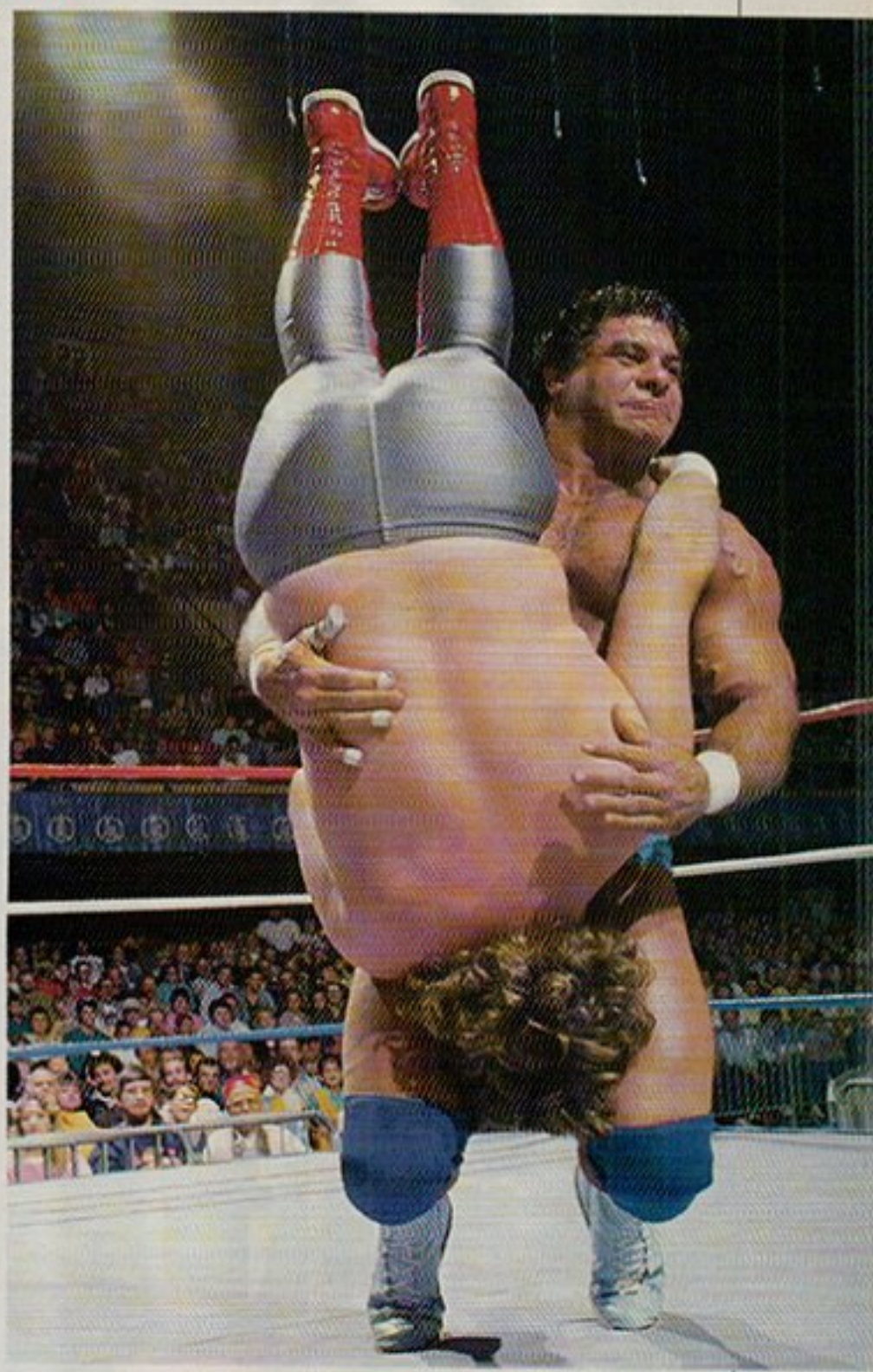
In Maivia's Federation debut at the 1996 *Survivor Series*, he outlasted Jerry "The King" Lawler, Hunter Hearst-Helmsley, Crush and Goldust to be the sole survivor of his team and get the win! Just a few months later during *RAW*'s return to the Manhattan Center, the rookie upset Triple H to claim his first Intercontinental Title reign. Despite suffering a severe knee injury and falling out of favor with the fans, "The Rock" bounced back in miraculous form after joining the Nation. After achieving the number one contender status, Vince McMahon awarded the title back to Maivia after then-Champion Stone Cold Steve Austin used his pickup truck as a weapon during their match at December's "DeGeneration X" Pay-Per-View.

KEY LOSSES:

After making his debut in the Federation, Rocky was in the midst of a tremendous winning streak when he faced a "sophomore slump". First, fans began to turn on the young hopeful—toting posters saying "Rocky Sucks" and "Rocky Must Die" to live events. After losing the Intercontinental belt to Owen Hart on *RAW IS WAR*, the University of Miami star was forced to the sidelines for nearly three months with torn knee ligaments. After recovering from these setbacks, "The Rock" is set to blow the lid off his junior year!

FINISHING MOVE:

During his first few months in the squared circle, Rocky used a running shoulder breaker to finish off his foes. Fans and wrestling insiders alike questioned the effectiveness of the maneuver. The night he made a surprise return from his knee injury on *RAW IS WAR*, Maivia debuted his new finisher—the Urinagi (or sidewalk slam)—on Chainz of D.O.A. Although Rocky is still new to the sport, his mastery of the



devastating move leaves most opponents with the wind completely knocked out of them and prone to an easy pinfall.

STRATEGY:

Against Muraco, Rocky would be wise to exploit his opponent's lack of mobility. The current "Rock" is by far the quicker of the two and would likely leave the Hawaiian's head spinning. Also, with D'Lo, Kama and Henry ringside as an added threat, would Muraco be able to overcome a four-on-one disadvantage? Managerial advice from the likes of Albano or Fuji would be key to Muraco's chances, but how much help would they be after the Nation finished with them? Realistically, the odds would be stacked against Don and without much backup to even that difference, Maivia would be the new rightful owner of his nickname! ■

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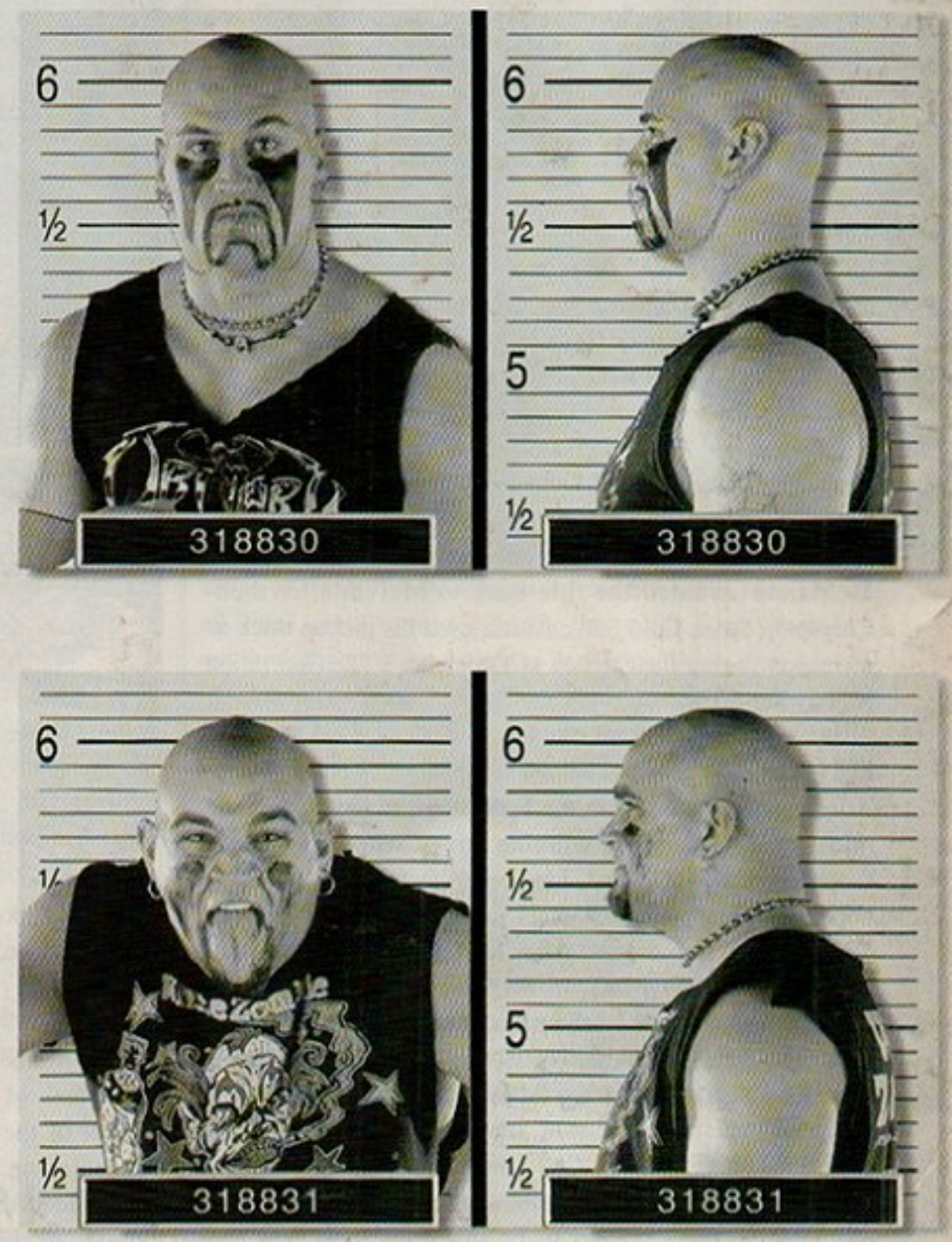

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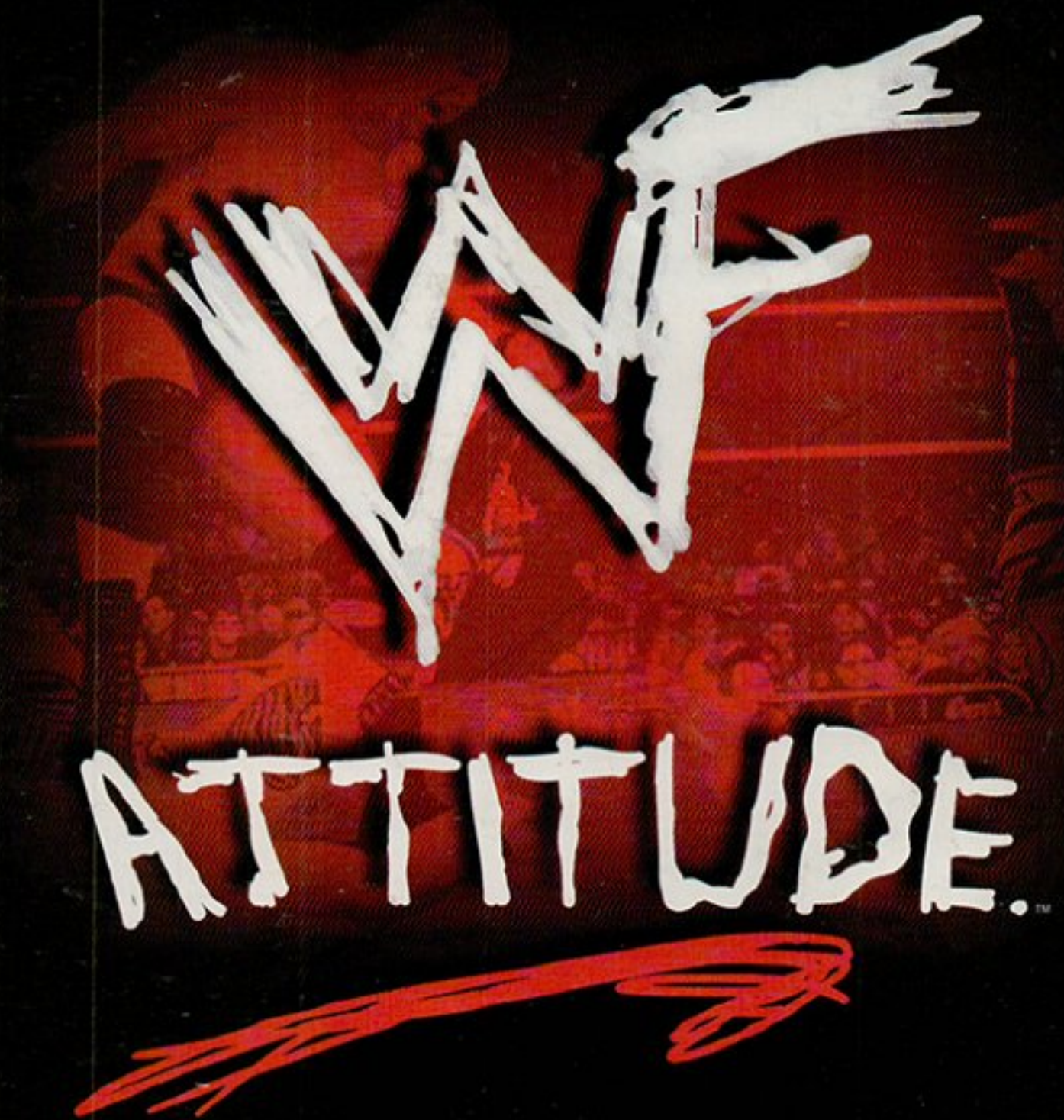

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